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HEALTHY PEOPLE • HEALTHY PLANET

# Common Ground



## Oh, Oh Canada!

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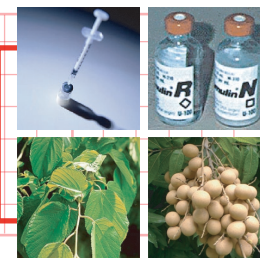




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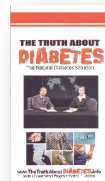
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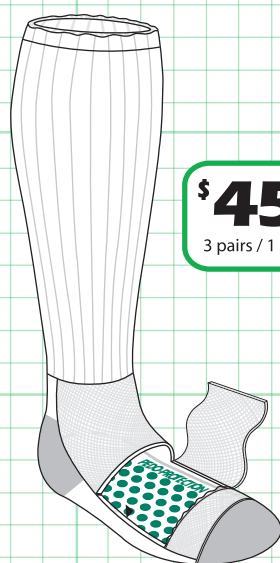


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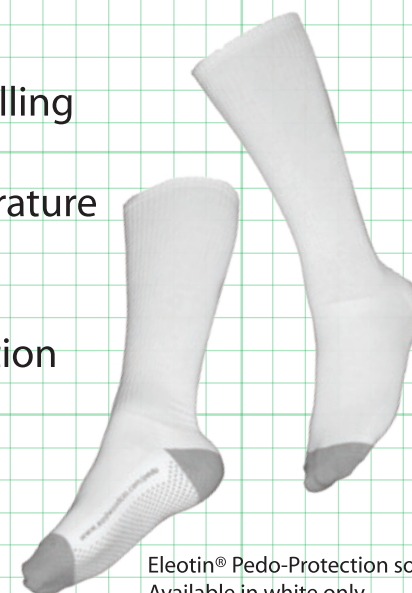
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**Omission from last month's contents page.** Artwork shown was a submission to the exhibit at the World Peace Forum, Culture: Mail - Peace - Art. Artist was Dmitrij Babenko of Russia. Exhibit was organized by Lois Klassen.

### COVER COMMENT

Oh, oh, just what's going on in Canada? With a new pro-war, pro-military, pro-American foreign policy, pro-oil, pro-Tex/Can/Mex merger, minority party in Ottawa, we decided to take an independent look at many things Canadians hold dear (while we still can). Like keeping Canada an independent sovereign nation that can control its own resources, media and culture. As well, improving the democracy of our governance. Canada is a country that is still in the process of becoming what it can be. Canada is a wonderful, unique place we need to understand and appreciate. May we remain a true north strong and free, rather than dependant upon and controlled by the USA, Britain, China, or any other foreign or corporate superpower. Our July Common Ground front cover graphic was designed by Kris Kozak.



CINDY SHEEHAN, P20



PATRICK WATSON, P6



FILMS, P12

### CULTURE

FILMS WORTH WATCHING ..... 12  
 ROBERT ALSTEAD

### ENVIRONMENT

SCIENCE MATTERS..... 23  
 DAVID SUZUKI  
 EARTHFUTURE.COM..... 24  
 GUY DAUNCEY

### HABITAT

SAVE ON SOAP USE..... 15  
 LYN ROSS

### HEALTH

NUTRISPEAK..... 8  
 VESANTO MELINA

### ORGANICS

GARDEN PATH..... 14  
 CAROLYN HERRIOT

### SPIRITUALITY

POWER OF NOW..... 18  
 ECKHART TOLLE  
 UNIVERSE WITHIN..... 19  
 GWEN RANDALL-YOUNG

### RESOURCE DIRECTORY ..... 25

### DATEBOOK ..... 32

### CLASSIFIED..... 33

### ON TRACK ZODIAC..... 24

### HEALTHY PEOPLE

**Women's health and the Flat Earth Society** ..... 9  
 ALAN CASSELS

**Anti-depressants prescription to suicide** ..... 10  
 ANGELA BISCHOFF

### HEALTHY PLANET

**Eagleridge Bluffs update** ..... 23  
 NED JACOBS

### HEALTHY DEMOCRACY

**Patrick Watson Interview** ..... 6  
 JOSEPH ROBERTS

**The disassembling of Canada** .. 16  
 GEOFF OLSON

**Oh, no Canada!** ..... 20  
 CINDY SHEEHAN

**BC energy at risk** ..... 22  
 CHARLES J. WALTER





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# Patrick Watson on life and media



INTERVIEW BY JOSEPH ROBERTS

*Patrick Watson is best known from This Hour Has Seven Days, aired from 1964-1966, on CBC television, which despite a viewership of around three million, was pulled by management because it became too controversial. Watson began his career as a radio actor in 1943 on the Kootenay Kid, a CBC dramatic series. He produced Close-up (1957-60), as well as Inquiry (1960-64) before co-creating and producing This Hour Has Seven Days, with Douglas Leisterman. Among his numerous producing, hosting, and writing credits are included: The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau, The Watson Report, The Canadian Establishment series, the Historica Foundation's Heritage Minutes, The Canadians: Biographies of a Nation and The Struggle for Democracy series (the Democracy series has now been aired in more than 40 countries and is available in libraries). He was chair of the CBC board of directors from 1989 to 1994. Patrick Watson is now working on a book of Irish ironies, which will be "a concise history of Ireland in comic verse." He is also putting together his literary reviews, global commentary and other print work, into a book with the working title Patrick Watson Off-Screen.*

**J**oseph Roberts: What do you feel about the state of media in Canada today?

**Patrick Watson:** The state of media in all Western industrialized countries is too much in the thrall of advertising. I'm talking particularly about news, but to a large extent about all forms of media. And, on the whole, I think we're not in very good shape.

Our public broadcaster has let us down terribly by conceiving, 24 years ago, that its morality should be the same as independent broadcasters, and that it should compete with them for audience numbers and revenue. That's not what a public broadcaster is supposed to do.

We have the obscenity of our public broadcaster, for which Canadian taxpayers are paying about a billion dollars a year, running American movies on Saturday night at eight o'clock. Movies you could go to the corner store and rent. That's a major absurdity when there is so much stuff that is not being covered, both in the

form of entertainment and information programming. There is a real gap for the public broadcaster to be working on.

Another good example is the public broadcaster's failure to go and collaborate with the specialty broadcasters, and get some of their terrific series, like the History Channel is doing. Taking a second position, we can get them for very modest prices and run them without advertising. We need to make sure that citizens are getting to see those on an ongoing basis.

The third major delinquency, on the part of the public broadcaster, is not going back into its archives, where we have stored thousands of hours of really outstanding Canadian drama and documentary, which is molding away in the vaults. There is an audiovisual portrait of our country, going through the processes of growth, over the last half century that contemporary Canadians should be able to look at. There is one instrument by which they could look at it, and that's the

public broadcaster. And, it's not doing it.

**JR:** There is this whole other issue, of media literacy. If people don't understand what media is about then they don't know if there is something wrong with the picture. We have small publications like, *Common Ground*, or the *Tyee*, the *Republic of East Vancouver* or *Adbusters*, and others, which are trying to wake people up. What have you found that works?

**PW:** I think on the whole we are better off in this country than many other parts of the industrialized world. But, what you are saying is absolutely true. I guess, for me, the greatest shortcoming is in the area of my professional and practical interest, television.

I am now collaborating with a man named Paul Jay who has been the executive producer of the CBC series called *Counterspin*. He is putting together an enormous worldwide organization, which originally was known as *Independent World Television*, and now is *The Real News*. Great

international journalists, for example, like Jonathan Shell from the United States; people in India; people in Britain; Australia and New Zealand; all of them are signing on to this.

The idea, with a time frame that sees us getting our first broadcast provision of this news service in 2008, is an international satellite news service, carried 24 hours a day, operated by journalists, no advertising, paid for entirely by subscription from satellite viewers.

We have the names of several hundred people who are prepared to put together a lot of money, on an investment basis. The business plan looks so good, they are all confident that in 10 years they will get their money back, and make some profit on it. But, the primary concern here is to develop a television service that is directed and run by journalists; created only in the interest of people who want thorough, globally oriented, television journalism.

So, this is in the process of developing, and this is the best idea that has come along in my lifetime. I think it's fabulous. It is a result of the advances in satellite technology that make it possible, at a relatively low cost, to go global. This is in development.

I'm very hopeful. I was skeptical at first, I thought Paul Jay was being romantic about it, now I'm convinced by the numbers, and by the extremely convincing, elaborate and well produced business plan. I hope I live long enough to make a contribution on the editorial end.

**JR:** We have all this new media today. I'm working with this magazine that's been in print for 24 years, now it is on the web, and still evolving to be more relevant.

**PW:** The Internet is going to be full of surprises for us, and the conventional media are really going to be transformed. *The Real News*, that we are developing, will have its first expression on the Internet. And, the Internet will remain a major field for it to work in. A great many people I know have their main news services sitting there on the Internet and they just punch in, from time to time, to check what's going on, and never turn on a conventional broadcast.

**JR:** You mentioned that democracy is not taking place very much on Parliament Hill.

**PW:** I did say that I am distressed with the way journalists generally, in this country, both in print and in the electronic media, tend to equate politics, and thus democracy, with what goes on in the House of Commons in Ottawa. One of the things I have found over the years, and began to be thoughtfully aware of, probably within the last decade, was the extent to which democracy is really at its most alive and well in small communities.

We have this little country place at



a port north of Toronto in a township called Mono, and I bumped into the mayor at the movies, and asked him if there was something that I could be doing to help. We're up here half the time and I wanted to make some kind of contribution. He asked me to join the Mono Economic Development Sustainability Action Committee. I've now been going to meetings with these guys for a little over two years. Most of them are volunteers, or elected council. We're dealing with the issue of how to develop this rural township economically, without tarnishing its greenness.

Also, we're close to being able to bring high speed Internet into this part of the country. We are dealing with dial up out here. And it would mean that a lot of people wouldn't have to drive into the office a couple of days a week, the work could be done from home. One of our guys came up with the motto, "Compute to work, don't commute to work."

JR: Are there any films you've seen lately worth watching?

PW: We've seen a few movies in the last year that I thought were admirable. *Good Night Good Luck* is absolutely outstanding, and was very nostalgic for me because I was sort of drawn into television by Edward R. Murrell. I had, as a young gradu-

was a jaw dropper.

Also, quite outside of the social dynamics we are talking about, I thought *March of the Penguins* was just about the best piece of cinematic work I've seen in years. In fact, it's worth getting the DVD. I thought the story of making of it was even better than the actual film.

JR: What books and magazines do you read?

PW: I read the *Atlantic* and *Harpers*, but not all the time. I read the *New Yorker* faithfully. It's been very good, except the cartoons have been a bit down the last few years. But, as journalism with a real range of interest and very good writing, and occasionally very good poetry, I find the *New Yorker* is rewarding. I also read *Books in Canada*, the *Literary Review of Canada*, the *London Review of Books*, and the *New York Review of Books*. They come in regularly and they get totally devoured. Also, I'm reading a lot of poetry. I'm memorizing a lot of poetry. I can probably recite poems to you for two and half, three hours.

On the book side, I'm reading a lot of biographies. I just stumbled over Volume 2 of Roy Foster's immense biography of Yeats, and have read it through very slowly and deliciously – it is 700 pages. Volume 1 is not in

***We have the obscenity of our public broadcaster, for which taxpayers are paying about a billion dollars a year, running American movies on Saturday night at eight o'clock. Movies you could go to the corner store and rent.***

ate student, intellectual snob, in the late 1940s, early 1950s, looked on television as beneath contempt. A few things changed my mind, most noticeably, Edward R. Murrell. What he did on the Joseph McCarthy story was outstanding.

Another George Clooney movie we saw recently, *Syriana*, is also challenging and rewarding. A *New Yorker* critic said something shrewd: "Don't see the movie at all, unless you are prepared to see it twice." It is that densely packed. Although, I think Clooney as a director is a little more deliberately intricate and puzzling than he needs to be in this film. However, his performance is magnificent. Also, there is a portrayal of lower class Arab workers who do the bottom jobs in the oil fields, which is really superb. It helps one understand the quantum of anger there is in the Muslim world against the West. It's a terrific movie.

I thought *Capote* was extraordinary. Within minutes I was completely taken in. And it won my assent – a key word in my vocabulary these days; it won my assent within the first few minutes. Hoffman's performance

the bookstores anymore, so I ordered it and will have it momentarily. I will read anything in and around Yeats.

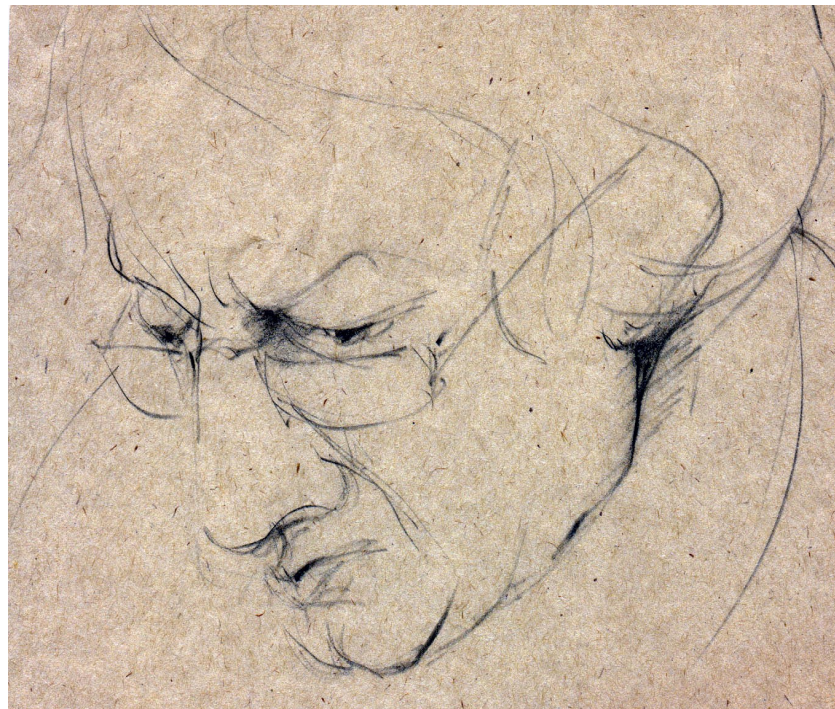
JR: What's closest to your heart these days?

PW: Leaving aside my wife, and my marriage, I would say that language continues to be an aspect of experience that takes my heart by storm. I mean primarily poetry, but not just. A well-spoken person, standing up in a crowd, who conveys heart and insight and engages that audience in some kind of common pursuit; that's terrific.

Also, I find the stage very satisfying. I've had a very interesting time working with one of the world's finest stage magicians, who happens to be a Canadian, named David Ben. We have been collaborating now, for going on 15 years. My co-writing with him for the stage... a lot of what we do is around language.

It's come to the point now that when we finish a script and get it on stage, we often can't remember who wrote which line. That is an absolutely exhilarating experience, to have that kind of collaboration.

JR: Relationships? Big question.



**Self portrait**

How do we get better at them? What have you learned about love and life?

PW: It's such an immense subject, I think one is constantly learning. I'm in the thirtieth year of my second marriage and it's been magnificent. It has grown the way it has because somehow early on the relationship we realized the most important thing we could do for one another was to tell the truth, which is sometimes brutal and difficult, but it has been the basis of a love and a collaboration that has sustained us through all kinds of difficult times. We have an extremely intricate, ongoing conversation about life, which is absolutely central to everything I do.

JR: Is there anything that gives you a sense of calmness and peace in the world? What do you do to get yourself centred?

PW: Some people would call what I do meditation but it's really more gazing. I am an atheist. I do not believe in life after death, and I do not believe that there is communication with people who have gone. I find the universe profoundly mysterious, and I am grateful for its existence, and I don't think, the race, if it lives and investigates for a million years, will ever figure out how the universe began, or what it ultimately means. I find myself awed in the face of that mystery.

It does not, for me, spell out, in any sense, the idea of some paternal intelligence sitting out there, directing affairs. I'm always a little uneasy when the word "spirit" is raised because it is so commonly used in that kind of immaterial personification. And, it is just something about which I am profoundly skeptical and not, in the end, very much interested, except in the way of exploring how a lot of really great minds have been convinced in the reality of a spiritual

existence, the presence of something like God.

A lot of people have indicated, like Auden did, when he converted to Christianity in his later years, that he really wanted to believe, and he wanted to be around people who believed, but he didn't necessarily subscribe to the creeds of the church. He spoke them; he spoke them as an approach to making some kind of profound, universal statement about the nature of life.

I think a lot of people who are in churches are there because of the sense of community with people, with people who have the desire to believe, and this desire to express something very concrete about all that mystery. But if you got them in a corner, and gave them a couple of double whiskeys, and enjoined them to be absolutely truthful, would say: "I don't believe the doctrine, but I want to be around it."

JR: I am reminded of a chapter in the book, *The Unconscious Civilization*, by John Ralston Saul. The chapter title was: *From Propaganda to Language*. It's as if humans have cultural or historical amnesia and they need to relearn the art of authentic conversation.

PW: I think that's extremely important and I was just reading somewhere within the last few days someone analyzing very carefully this whole seemingly impenetrable conflict between Islam and the West and saying that the only way out of it is for the warring parties to learn the art of conversation.

JR: What would you like say to Common Ground reader in closing?

PW: Trust in the will of benevolent human beings to try and make it better. The universe is steady; change takes place because people do it. The universe is very reliable.



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EPA and DHA are members of the omega-3 family of fats that is commonly found in seafood. Yet, many people are finding plenty of sound reasons to forgo fish nowadays. Seafood is known to be a concentrated source of two types of contaminants: heavy metals, such as lead, mercury and cadmium, and industrial pollutants, such as PCBs, DDT, dioxin, flame-retardants and many more. Fish is also a primary source of food-borne illness.

There are also some compelling ecological and ethical arguments for avoiding fish. The Natural Resources Defense Council estimates that about 70 percent of the world's fish populations are now fully-fished, overexploited, depleted or only very slowly recovering. Furthermore, commercial fishing operations generally have huge by-catches and the fish, turtles and sea mammals that are unintentionally caught generally do not survive.

Fortunately, including seafood in our diet is not essential to our health. Apart from eating fish, there are two ways to obtain the two long-chain omega-3 fatty acids that do such important jobs for us. Our bodies can build EPA and DHA from alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), another member of the omega-3 family, which is found in flaxseed, hempseed, walnuts, canola oil and soy. A good choice is to include one of the following in your daily diet: two teaspoons of flaxseed oil, two tablespoons of ground flaxseed, or a handful of walnuts (1-2 ounces).

In theory, we should all be able to convert the omega-3 fatty acids in flaxseed to EPA and DHA. Yet, it seems that some of us are less efficient at converting ALA to EPA and DHA. The following people may benefit from consuming direct sources of EPA and DHA:

- Pregnant women, due to the requirements for EPA and DHA for the fetus
- People with depression, schizophrenia or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), have conditions linked to low levels of omega-3 fatty acids.

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- 1/4 to 1/2 cup nutritional yeast
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp ground flaxseed (optional-thickener)

• People with diabetes, who have a limited capacity to convert ALA to EPA and DHA.

• The elderly.

• People with a high intake of fats, such as omega-6 fatty acids, trans fats and saturated fats, which inhibit the conversion process.

Thus, for some people, direct sources of EPA and DHA may be beneficial. Recent research has shown EPA to lessen the symptoms of schizophrenia for some people. Low levels of DHA have been associated with depression, Alzheimer's disease and ADHD and may impair brain and eye development in infants.

Fortunately, EPA and DHA are also available in sea plants, such as seaweed and cold-water microalgae. In fact, this is where fish get their EPA and DHA. (Here, we refer to DHA-rich microalgae, not blue-green algae.) Recent scientific breakthroughs allow us to get these omega-3s in a vegetarian form derived directly from the microalgae. Visit [www.veganesentials.com](http://www.veganesentials.com) for information about omega-3 DHA and Omega-Zen-3, both of which are sources of vegan DHA. A very new organic, vegan British product, V-Pure at [www.water4.net](http://www.water4.net) combines both EPA and DHA.

For people in good health, flaxseed provides a daily requirement for ALA, which our bodies convert to EPA and DHA. Two tablespoons of Liquid Gold Dressing (above) provides the daily requirement of omega-3 fatty acids, and is delicious on salad, baked potatoes, rice and steamed broccoli.

Vesanto Melina is co-author of seven food and nutrition classics. For more information about omega-3 fatty acids and other nutrients, read *Becoming Vegetarian*, *Raising Vegetarian Children* and *Becoming Vegan*. For information about omega-3s and various health conditions, read *The Food Allergy Survival Guide*. [www.nutrispeak.com/](http://www.nutrispeak.com/) [vesanto@nutrispeak.com/](mailto:vesanto@nutrispeak.com) 604-882-6782.

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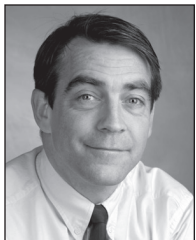
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# Women's health and the Flat Earth Society

DRUG BUST • ALAN CASSELES

For many people, it has taken a long time to come to believe that the Earth is round.

Sometimes, we are so connected with a theory and so personally invested in an idea, that even when it is decisively proved wrong, we just can't bring ourselves to believe the new thing.

In medicine, theories about how to treat certain conditions or diseases flourish and are difficult to eradicate, even when they are inarguably proved to be overwhelmingly bad for us. Most of us are "Flat Earthers" about a variety of things that are trivial and

16,000) and the pure scientific firepower the WHI was able to employ, it was probably one of the most influential and rigorous studies ever conducted in the world. Long-term, randomized and a controlled clinical trial – the "gold standard" in research terms – it was one of the largest prevention studies of its kind.

While the short-term effectiveness of treating menopausal symptoms with hormones was already established, the preventative benefits of taking estrogen replacement therapy (ERT) and hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for the long term was

*Four years ago, millions of patients and physicians around the world woke to the news that the United States National Institutes of Health... warned that a type of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) used by millions of women around the world was causing them more harm than good.*

harmless, but sometimes those outmoded ideas continue to inhabit the beliefs and perceptions of health professionals, whose recommendations may mean the difference between life and death for their patients.

On July 9, 2002, millions of patients and physicians around the world woke to the news that the United States National Institutes of Health had just halted a major clinical trial. In news reports picked up around the world, the NIH warned that a type of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) – a combination of estrogen and progestin – used by millions of women around the world was causing them more harm than good.

For hormones, this was the day the music died. Prescribed to more than seven million post-menopausal, North American women as a standard treatment for menopausal symptoms, and increasingly pushed for everything from heart attacks to osteoporosis prevention, this was also the day the Earth stopped being flat.

Called the Women's Health Initiative (WHI), the study found that the combined drugs caused increases in breast cancer, heart attacks, strokes and blood clots. Although the risk to an individual woman was small, the huge number of women taking these drugs meant that the preventable death and disability measured across the globe was intolerably high.

In terms of the sheer number of women in the study (more than

still a guess. The prevention theory was no doubt hyped by drug manufacturers and embraced by physicians, and more than four decades of use had many people believing these drugs prevented heart disease, colon cancer, Alzheimer's, urinary incontinence and broken bones due to osteoporosis, as well as being hailed for improving the skin and reducing wrinkles.

Some have called the widespread popularity of hormone replacement therapy a "triumph of marketing and advertising over science."

Yet even after this definitive study, there is evidence that Flat Earthers are still in our midst four years later, and HRT is still being promoted far beyond what the safety data would suggest. Sadly, the strongest proponents of its use are among those professionals, of whom many women trust the most on health issues: obstetricians and gynecologists.

In February 2006, a booklet and web resource called *The Journalist's Menopause Handbook: A Companion Guide to the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada Menopause Consensus Report* was launched. (See [www.sogc.org/media/pdf/advisories/Menopause-journalists-guide\\_e.pdf](http://www.sogc.org/media/pdf/advisories/Menopause-journalists-guide_e.pdf))

Does this booklet debunk the flat-Earth beliefs of those wishing to promote continued pharmaceutical enhancement of women's midlife? Suffice to say the *Menopause Handbook*, "made possible through an

## HEALTH

unrestricted educational grant from Wyeth Canada," actually does the opposite, and confirms that the Earth is, well, flattish. Do I have to point out that there is no company on the planet (either flat or round, for that matter), which has more richly capitalized on the pharmaceutical treatment of menopausal women than Wyeth?

The goal of this *Menopause Handbook* is laudatory enough, and it does well to try to inform journalists about menopause (including helpful lifestyle advice). Much of it is drawn from the 2006 *Menopause Consensus Report*, prepared to "... provide guidance to health-care professionals to better understand menopause and treat patients in accordance with the most current clinical evidence."

The nine recommendations in the *Menopause Consensus Report* concerning "symptomatic treatment" are worth repeating:

1. Healthcare providers should offer hormone therapy (ET/estrogen-progestin therapy) as the most effective therapy for the medical management of menopausal symptoms.

2. The primary indication for hormone therapy (HT) should be for the management of moderate to severe menopausal symptoms.

3. HT should be prescribed at the lowest effective dose, although the long-term risk/benefit ratio of lower dose HT has not been demonstrated.

4. HT should be prescribed for the appropriate duration to achieve treatment goals, while taking into consideration risks and benefits and the woman's quality of life.

5. HT may be prescribed for an extended period, following proper counselling, if a woman decides that the benefits outweigh the risks. Periodic re-evaluation is strongly recommended.

6. Either progestins alone or low-dose oral contraceptives may be offered as alternatives for the relief of menopausal symptoms, especially during the transition phase.

7. Non-hormonal prescription therapies, including antidepressant agents gabapentine, clonidine and bellergeral, may be prescribed as alternatives to HT to reduce vasomotor symptoms.

8. Healthcare providers may offer identified complementary and alternative medicine with demonstrated efficacy for mild menopausal symptoms.

9. Complementary and alternative medicine, including black cohosh, red

*continued on p.13*

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# Anti-depressants prescription to suicide

BY ANGELA BISCHOFF



In 1990, recognizing a gap in the urban environmental scene, Angela Bischoff and Tooker Gomberg co-founded The EcoCity Society, an Edmonton-based, urban environmental advocacy organization that took on an array of issues including waste, climate change, ozone depletion, pesticides, transportation and energy. With Tooker working from the inside at city hall, and Angela building public support for his initiatives, through EcoCity they successfully changed the face of the city by shifting public and political awareness and even winning the odd campaign. After losing his council seat in '95, Tooker and Angela launched the Greenspiration Odyssey, travelling the globe on bicycles and documenting, through video and writing, inspiring ecological initiatives.

After the tragic death of her partner Tooker, due to pharma-induced suicide, Angela immersed herself in issues of mental health, sustainable activism, Big-Pharma, and the dangers of anti-depressant drugs. She is currently writing, researching, networking and speaking exclusively about these issues through the Healthy Mind Body Planet project, a 23-city, cross-Canada, multi-media, educational tour, tabloid and documentary, focusing on mental, physical and planetary health. [www.greenspiration.org](http://www.greenspiration.org) [healthymind@web.ca](mailto:healthymind@web.ca) She can be reached at [greenspi@web.ca](mailto:greenspi@web.ca)

I'm a suicide survivor. My soulmate of 17 years, Tooker Gomberg, committed suicide March 3, 2004. I lost my best friend and the world lost a warrior.

The pain around suicide is unfathomable and indescribable for those left behind, but especially for the person driven to take his/her life. Unless you've been there, you just can't know this darkest torture of the soul. I saw Tooker's anguish, one so deep and riveting that he saw no choice but to end the suffering through death.

What could possibly have driven him to such despair?

The world lost a warrior

Tooker Gomberg, internationally renowned for his environmental, peace and justice activism, gave up the ghost at age 48. We had an excellent relationship. He had skills and friends. He was kind, humorous, courageous, a fighter, a leader, and he had fame and respect around the world. What went wrong?

His first depression hit in 2001 and continued into 2002, following the Quebec City free trade protests, police clampdown and horrific mass tear gas poisoning. Tooker was discouraged and exhausted and his depression zapped the spark out of him for nine months. He tried many holistic alternatives to pharmaceutical drugs before turning to an SSRI antidepressant. Nothing seemed to help but, in time, he climbed out of his despair.

When his second depression hit a year later, unemployed after moving to a new city, he sought help through counselling and pharmaceutical drugs, as this was the only option our health care system would pay for. Psychiatrists and their drugs are covered,

but naturopathic doctors and their medicines are not, nor are cognitive behavioural therapists, massage therapists or other helpful treatments.

When Tooker's psychiatrist prescribed the antidepressant Remeron, his anxiety and agitation went through

these drugs may help some people, they are not reliable, not even close.

If only drug companies were straight up about this. But that wouldn't be good for sales. On the contrary, doctors are instructed through industry propaganda to

***When Tooker's psychiatrist prescribed the antidepressant Remeron, his anxiety and agitation went through the roof – clearly an adverse reaction... After just five weeks on the drug, Tooker's agitation sent him over the railing of Halifax's MacDonald Bridge.***

the roof – clearly an adverse reaction. However, his psychiatrist didn't see it as such and instead, encouraged him to stick with the drug, repeatedly increasing the dosages to the maximum. Then he prescribed a tranquilizer to counter the agitation. After just five weeks on the drug, Tooker's agitation sent him over the railing of Halifax's MacDonald Bridge.

He wrote in his suicide note that he was anxious, felt like a zombie and couldn't think.

Let's look at the facts.

Three weeks after Tooker died, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) publicly associated antidepressant drugs with worsened depression and suicidal ideation. I was dumbfounded and immediately immersed myself in this field, reading everything I could.

What I learned is that, typically, one in four patients feel worse when beginning any antidepressant drug and quit it within the first month. Almost half quit within three months. So while

"reduce patient dropout" by "managing" the side effects and encouraging patients to stick with the program rather than to listen to their patients' experiences.

Agitation is a very common side effect of antidepressant drugs, especially during early stages of treatment or after a change in dosage (up or down). Extreme agitation is known as akathisia, an internal unrest or turmoil.

In clinical trials for SSRIs, the most commonly prescribed antidepressants, this reaction has been recognized and documented since the early '80s. Prozac's clinical trials, both prior to and after its launch in 1988, recorded rates of agitation and akathisia of between five and 25 percent.

Conservatively speaking then, at least one (and as many as five) in 20 patients become agitated on antidepressant drugs – a significant adverse reaction that doctors should be informed about and patients warned about. However, generally,

they are not informed. Agitation is a very potent predictor of suicide and violence.

By extrapolating from clinical trial data and multiplying by numbers of users, Dr. David Healy from the UK claims that one in 500 users of antidepressant drugs will complete suicide because of the drug. That's 100,000 tragic and unnecessary deaths among the 40 to 50 million people on antidepressant drugs worldwide.

Clearly, drug companies have a lot to lose if this information becomes well understood. And user numbers are growing quickly: there was an 80 percent increase in antidepressant prescriptions in Canada from 1999 to 2004.

In February 2005, Dr. Dean Fergusson of the Ottawa Health Research Institute and faculty of medicine at the University of Ottawa published a shocking finding in the *British Medical Journal*. His meta-analysis reviewed data on 90,000 patients from some 700 clinical trials and found that patients were *twice as likely to attempt suicide on antidepressants as on sugar pills*.

Huh? Patients are put on antidepressant drugs to lower suicide risk, not to double it!

Just how effective are antidepressants in relieving symptoms of depression? Incredibly, there is little evidence that antidepressant drugs actually produce benefits. We know that they may help some people in the short term, but over the long term, we find a worsening of depression or anxiety compared to placebo-treated patients. Too often, more severe psychiatric symptoms are triggered by the drug itself, such as drug-induced



manic or psychotic attacks, often treated with more drugs. For everyone helped by a drug treatment, there may be another harmed.

There is also the disturbing and very real issue of dependence on antidepressants. When you try to stop taking them, you can suffer an emotionally distressing withdrawal that includes "crashing" with depression, fatigue and feelings of hopelessness, which also often involves painful physical symptoms, such as flu-like symptoms, muscle cramps and shock-like headaches.

What are the alternatives?

Leaving pharmaceutical drugs aside, there's much we can do to treat depression and anxiety, especially of the mild and moderate sort, where it all starts.

Proper diet, exercise, talk therapy and hobbies keep your mind and body strong. Spiritual practice, meaningful work and community keep you connected and centred. But it all comes down to self-awareness and self-love.

We all need to support those in our life who are suffering, especially during their crisis periods. Depression is cyclical. It comes and goes. When people are in the depth of despair, they may not think rationally. They need you to give them a reality check, to remind them that they're worthy of love and life. Get them beyond their valley of darkness, and when you're going through your own dark night of the soul, someone will be there for you, to pull you back from the brink.

It's better to light a candle than curse the darkness. With intelligence and integrity, and with the intention of patient safety rather than profit, we can save lives. With compassion and skill and a dose of generosity, each of us can reach out to those we love during their dark times. We must. We're all connected, and we're all making a difference.

*Reprinted from Depression Expression: Raising Questions About Antidepressants, a project of Healthy Mind Body Planet.*

## Our recommendations to reduce harm by Angela Bischoff

We believe Health Canada should support a public health framework that reduces the use of psychoactive drugs through health promotion, rehabilitation and prevention.

Health Canada should actively discourage physicians from prescribing SSRIs to adolescents and women of childbearing age.

Health Canada should make all clinical trial data available to the public, including all serious adverse events.

Health Canada should require that clinical trials last long enough to study long term outcomes, including withdrawal, to reflect the time period that patients normally take antidepressants.

We call upon Health Canada to immediately issue safety advisories for all antidepressant drugs, which would include the risks of suicidal ideation and violence as well as other reactions.

We believe that reporting of all serious adverse reactions to Health Canada's adverse drug reaction

monitoring program should be mandatory for all physicians, and promoted and expanded for public use.

All provincial colleges of physicians and surgeons should develop standard practice guidelines on suicide assessment, to ensure patients are monitored for suicidal ideation.

The provincial ministries of education, in concert with ministries of health, should monitor closely the growing trend toward pharmaceutically sponsored speakers presenting to students about depression and suicide, talks that frequently conclude with pro-prescription drug solutions.

We implore the media and the justice system to take note of the serious, ongoing role of antidepressants in violence and suicide.

We call for Parliamentary hearings on antidepressant drugs to explore the nature and extent of harm many Canadians have suffered as a result of their prescription, with the aim of preventing harm.

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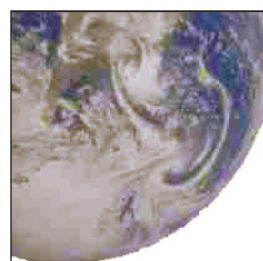
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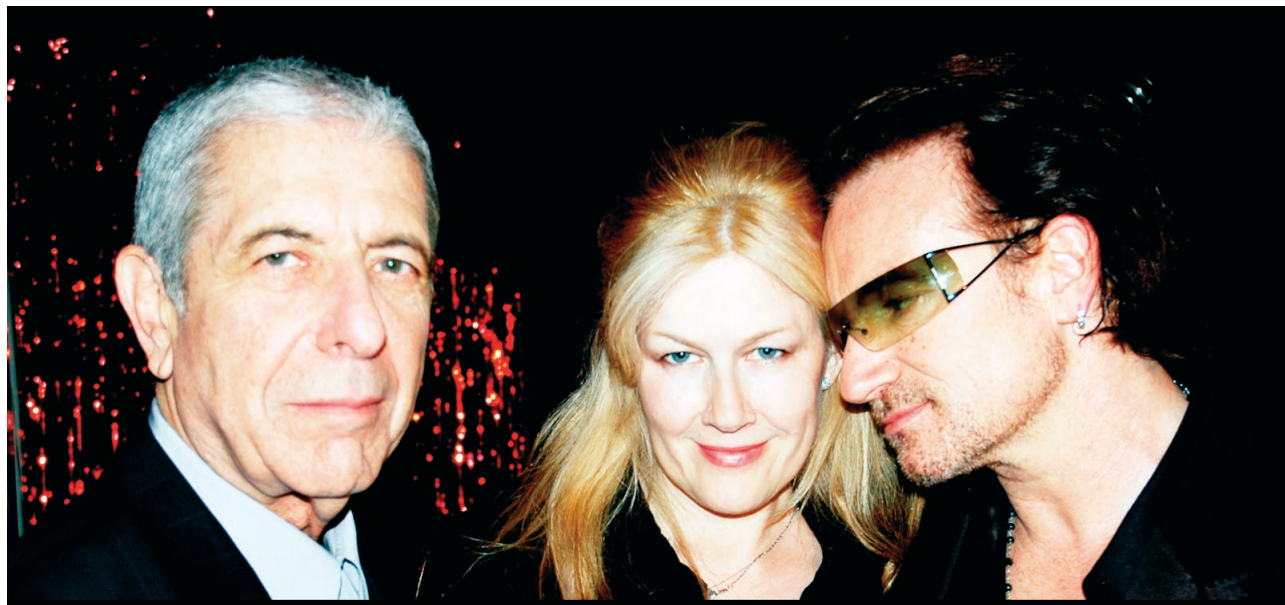
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# Leonard Cohen's your man



Leonard Cohen, filmmaker Lian Lunson and Bono at a reception for Leonard Cohen: I'm Your Man

BY ROBERT ALSTEAD

*Leonard Cohen: I'm Your Man* (now showing) is part concert movie, part tribute movie and part biography of the septuagenarian poet-songwriter from

Montreal. In January 2005, musicians from a variety of musical backgrounds played tribute to Cohen in the *Came So Far for Beauty* concert at the Sydney Opera House.

Director Lian Lunson's artful documentary pieces together some memorably intense performances of Cohen's works from the concert by the likes of Rufus Wainwright, Nick Cave (performing a swaggering version of the title song) and Beth Orton. Interspersed between each performance are interviews with Cohen himself as he reflects on the course his life has taken and the lessons learned.

The performers also talk, with disarming humility, about the huge influence of Cohen on their own careers. U2's Bono and The Edge are almost at a loss for words to express Cohen's importance. Cohen performs his only track here – the wry *Tower of Song* – with U2 at the end of the documentary. Bono talks of Cohen's sensuality ("his world was brightly coloured") as being what grabbed him. Both talk of his rare ability to convey metaphysical and spiritual life with ease and humour.

Cohen holding forth with that mellifluous bass voice goes back to the early days – why he started writing poetry (to impress girls with his mind), his calmness on the death of his father (it was "in the realm of things that can't be disputed or judged"). He takes us through his years as a Montreal poet to the rock star years when he was hanging out

with the beatniks in New York and jokes that his mother would not have approved of his song bragging about his fling with Janis Joplin in *Chelsea Hotel No. 2*. Rufus Wainwright gives a rousing rendition of the song and also a memorable cover of *Everybody Knows*, although like other performers seems a little too dependent on the lyric sheet at times.

Cohen says of his much publicized retreat into monastic life in his later years that it was more his Japanese master that drew him in rather than the religion, although throughout the film a buddhist equanimity suffuses his reflections on his accomplishments and his "failures."

While the appeal of the performers, who vary from folkie to Britpop (Jarvis Cocker), is sure to vary depending on personal taste, the highlight song for me was the androgenous, powerfully voiced Antony, who I'd never heard before, singing *If It Be Your Will*. It sends shivers down the spine.

The film occasionally seems uncertain of its course, but in spite of this drawback, the strength of the performances and being in the company of this most sensitive of wordsmiths make it worth seeing.

If you ever wondered why General Motors is going down the tubes then see *Who Killed the Electric Car?* (opening July 21). This is another well-crafted documentary from south of the border, in the vein of *Enron: The Smartest Guys In the Room*, that looks at how corporate self-interest skewed the electric car baby no sooner had it got out of the garage.

Interviewees, including a goateed Mel Gibson and Tom Hanks, are a passionate crowd when it comes

to their electric vehicles – perhaps no surprise given the bum rap their machines have had in recent years. In particular, ex-owners of the EV-1 – the sleek, electric car that GM execs wished the company had never released to the world – prove a highly determined crowd. When GM's top brass decided to remove the car from the market, EV-1 owners, led by a former GM employee, staked out the last repossessed electric vehicles and even offered, in vain, to buy them from GM before it whisked the cars off to be crushed and shredded without trace. As one ex-EV-1 owner puts it, "I've never seen a company be so cannibalistic about its own product before."

Framed playfully as a who-dun-it, and a little too self-conscious that it will be denounced for espousing conspiracy theories, the film posits convincingly that the time was right for the electric car, but the usual suspects of big oil, with around \$100 trillion of crude still in the ground, car manufacturers, heavily invested in the traditional combustion engine automobile, and good old lack of political will and consumer inertia, sent the car to an early grave in 2002.

Oh, and don't hold out for fuel-cell powered cars. Mass produced hydrogen fuel cells are years off. "Disneyland" is how one fuel-cell car developer puts it. The film ends on an optimistic note – electric powered vehicles are set to make a comeback.

*Robert Alstead writes for iofilm.ca. He is making a documentary about cycling, You Never Bike Alone (www.youneverbikealone.com/.)*



cont. from p.9

clover-derived isoflavone and vitamin E may be recommended for the reduction of mild vasomotor symptoms. Long-term efficacy and safety data are still lacking.

I would summarize these recommendations in one sentence:

To relieve your menopausal symptoms, use hormones for as long as required, while balancing the risks and benefits. Try other pills if you like, but steer away from alternatives because we can't say for sure how helpful they are.

The question then comes to this: how does the average woman actually learn about balancing risks and benefits? Unfortunately, the guide doesn't seem to have much room for dwelling on the risk/benefit ratio; nor does it provide many numbers to help women judge what that ratio might be. To find how often adverse effects related to these drugs occur, you need to return to the results of the WHI study. If you gave the treatment to 10,000 women, (similar to the women enrolled in the WHI study), it would cause these types of events (vs. placebo):

- 29 percent increased risk for coronary heart disease: 37 vs. 30 events: 7 more events annually
- 41 percent increased risk for stroke: 29 vs. 21 events: 8 more events annually
- 111 percent increased risk for venous thrombosis (blood clots) 34 vs. 16 events: 18 more events annually
- 26 percent increased risk for breast cancer: 38 vs. 30 events: 8 more events annually
- 37 percent decreased risk for colon cancer: 10 vs. 16 events: 6 fewer events annually
- 34 percent decreased risk for hip fracture: 10 vs. 15 events: 5 fewer events annually

The study concluded with the following claim: "... overall health risks exceeded benefits," meaning that you shouldn't be using these drugs to prevent chronic diseases, such as heart disease, blood clots or strokes because rather than preventing those types of nasties, they cause them.

You find no such doom and gloom in the Journalist's Menopause Handbook.

What does the Handbook say, for example, about the risk of stroke?

It notes that healthcare providers should not initiate or continue HT for the sole purpose of preventing CVD (coronary artery disease and stroke). Fair enough, but that's almost like saying that perhaps the Earth is flatter than you may believe. The word "clots, as in "blood clots to the legs or lungs" is not even mentioned in the document, stating only: "Healthcare providers should abstain from prescribing HT in women at high risk for venous thromboembolic disease."

While other major omissions are equally mystifying, I would agree with one statement in the Handbook. According to the authors, the media does have a "... critical role in informing and educating Canadians about important health issues." Sadly, they are not going to get much information following the trail of these "Flat Earthers."

Canadians have a very strong interest in new advances in medicine and new discoveries about older medicines. Pharmaceutical manufacturers, however, who are accountable to shareholders, are interested in ensuring that sales are not jeopardized when new information arises about their products.

Excessive hype and/or fear about specific drugs can only be prevented by accurate and unbiased drug reporting in professional journals, information releases and in the mainstream press. The Journalist's Menopause Handbook proves that if we allow health information to be interpreted by those who still believe the earth is flat, we do so at our own peril.

I don't scorn the Flat Earthers. I am embarrassed for them. I also pity the women, who are following advice that has been dressed up by a professional society so invested in its own outmoded theories, that it can't see the evidence for what it is. Shame on you.

Only time will tell how much harm they continue to cause women by maintaining that the Earth can't be that round.

Alan Cassels is co-author of *Selling Sickness: How the World's Biggest Pharmaceutical Companies Are Turning Us All Into Patients*, and a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria. He is also the founder of *Media Doctor Canada* [www.mediadoctor.ca/](http://www.mediadoctor.ca/),



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### Eagleridge continued from p.21

Squamish, hungry for property-tax revenue, is using the Sea to Sky upgrade to promote itself as a bedroom for Vancouver, and developments are planned up and down the 100 km corridor. While congestion on this route will mean fat profits for the maintenance contractor, it will also clog the Lions Gate bridge, fueling demands for a third crossing and a downtown freeway to Highway 1.

It will worsen what it was supposed to fix: the winding two-lane stretch between Lion's Bay and Porteau Cove will be even more dangerous, and the Eagleridge diversion will be one of the most perilous paved roads in the province.

The protesters are not giving up. Their appeal of the injunction is before the court. By locating active nests of protected birds, they have delayed the destruction of the Larsen wetlands. They continue to call for a halt to this

dangerous diversion and to the breaking of our Olympic promise.

Coalition president Dennis Perry has warned that Eagleridge is the "canary in the coal mine." Citizens who are justifiably alarmed about the Gateway program, Deltaport expansions and depletion of the Agricultural Land Reserve, and who are similarly frustrated by lies, insincere "consultations" and secretive P3s are joining forces in a regional campaign of civic education and action.

The Eagleridge protesters could have been consumed by rage and despair, but they continue to be motivated by their love of nature and concern for human safety. These defenders of our environment and the public trust deserve our full support.

*Ned Jacobs, who lives in East Vancouver, was one of the 23 protesters arrested on May 25. For more information and images visit [www.eagleridgebluffs.ca](http://www.eagleridgebluffs.ca)*



# Cut-and-come-again veggies

ON THE GARDEN PATH • CAROLYN HERRIOT

Cut-and-come-again refers to a simple method of harvesting young salad greens, whereby they are cut back with a pair of scissors and left to regrow. This way, several collections can be made from a single sowing. Mesclun (baby salad greens) mixes are suitable for growing in the smallest garden, and *perfect* for raised bed or container gardening.

### Sowing a mesclun patch:

1. Blend a mix of suitable seeds, or buy a packet of prepared mix. (Note: Mustard greens and arugula add heat to the salad blend. Dandelion, chicory and endive add a tangy bitterness to the mix.)
2. Scatter seeds lightly over a prepared bed or filled planter.
3. Cover lightly and water.
4. Keep soil moist once the crop is growing.
5. Harvest the baby greens when they are four inches high, either by picking individual leaves, or by cutting to one inch above the ground with a pair of scissors.
6. Fertilize with liquid fish fertilizer. In two to three weeks, another crop will be ready to harvest.
7. Broadcast seeds every three to four weeks and cut-and-come-again greens will keep on coming.

Suitable seeds: arugula, beets, chard, chervil, chicory, corn salad, dandelion, endive, Italian parsley, kale, cress, lettuces, mustard greens, onion greens, oriental greens, orach, sorrel, spinach and perpetual spinach.

For winter mixes: winter-hardy lettuces, oriental greens, mustard greens, kales, cress, corn salad and spinach.

### Four-season food gardens:

Why leave garden beds empty. Once early crops of peas, lettuce and garlic have been harvested, you can plant a wide array of winter vegetables? There are more than 40 varieties of cold-hardy vegetables to choose from.

The secret is getting the timing right, but once you factor a winter garden into your plans, it's easy. Allocate garden space specifically for winter crops, or follow early crops of favas, peas, lettuce, potatoes, garlic or shallots by seeding or transplanting winter vegetables in their place. When following an earlier crop, don't forget to feed the soil by adding organic soil amendments. Mixing compost, aged manure or leaf mulch into the soil helps keep fertility high for future follow-on crops.

If sowing seeds directly in the garden, the best time is late June to early August, but don't forget the impor-

tance of daily watering during hot spells. Thin out emerging seedlings and help them establish more quickly with a few feedings of liquid fish fertilizer.

Transplants of cool-weather vegetables can be started outdoors, as they germinate in cooler temperatures. Most take only seven to 10 days to germinate and the only protection they need is from the sun. Transplant into the garden no later than mid-September to give the plants time to establish good roots before the onset of hard frosts.

Winter vegetables survive freezing temperatures by pumping sugars into their cells as antifreeze. That's why kales, collards and brussels sprouts taste sweeter after a few hard frosts. Once harvested, sugars quickly convert back to starch, which is why store-bought vegetables can never match the flavour of fresh-picked ones.

Growing a winter vegetable garden is a snap, once the vegetables have been planted. There's no weeding, no insect problems to deal with and no watering. All you have to do is put on your gumboots to harvest them!

*Excerpted from A Year on the Garden Path: A 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide by Carolyn Herriot. \$29.95. Earthfuture Publications, Victoria, BC. Available at Banyen Books, Duthie Books or at [www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath/](http://www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath/)*

### Plants for your winter food garden:

Lettuces: Brunia (red oakleaf), Rouge d'Hiver (romaine), Winter Density (butterhead), Vulcan (red leaf lettuce).  
Salad greens: Endive, corn salad, cress, arugula.  
Greens: Chard, kale, collards, mustard greens, perpetual spinach, tatsoi, bok-choi, Lutz beet greens.  
Crucifers: Sprouting broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower.  
Onions: Leeks, garlic, French shallots, perennial bunching onions.  
Root crops: Turnips, beets, carrots, Jerusalem artichokes, celeriac.  
Herbs: Parsley, coriander, rosemary, bay, oregano, sweet marjoram, chives, sorrel, lovage.

**Tips:** For transplanting from late-June to mid-July.

Transplant established seedlings no later than mid-September.

Help establish transplants with feeds of liquid fish fertilizer.

Add lime to brassicas to prevent club root.

Removing older leaves regularly prevents a build up of flea beetles and eliminates cabbage worms.



# GVRD's sustainable region initiative saves on soap use

## HABITAT

BY LYN ROSS

The Lower Mainland is surrounded by breathtaking natural aquatic beauty, which residents appreciate and protect. Unfortunately, we are unintentionally producing an unnecessary amount of soap residue, which ends up in our local waterways and ecosystems. More correctly called surfactants, their toxic presence leads to environmental degradation. The solution is surprisingly simple: use less soap and at the same time stop wasting your money.

The local soft water situation, insufficient labels on packaging and lack of public education greatly exacerbate the problem. Unique to the Lower Mainland, our mountain-sourced water

*Unless the detergent, soap, shampoo or similar cleaning product is specifically designed and/or indicates a measured amount for soft water application, you are using too much.*

supply, which is much softer than almost anywhere else in the country, needs much-reduced amounts of these surfactants for cleaning.

To put this into perspective, the majority of large cities across Canada have water that contains 80 to 123mg/L of various minerals such as calcium and magnesium, compared to only 3mg/L locally. Surfactants, whether chemically produced or naturally derived, overcome water hardness by reducing surface tension and attracting, loosening and holding dirt in suspension until it can be rinsed away.

Essentially, surfactants are the active "sudsy" cleaning ingredient contained in all (conventional and natural) laundry detergents, soaps, personal and household cleaning products, even toothpaste, and the majority of these products are formulated for use in medium to hard water.

In comparison, because our soft water works better, the surfactants don't have to, which means there is a substantial amount of residual soap left over after the wash cycle or cleaning process is complete. And, you guessed it; it ends up in your clothes, on your skin, down the drain or directly in the local waterways, with a negative impact on the survivabil-

ity of fish and other aquatic life, even though surfactants are all biodegradable.

Unless otherwise specified, the directions on most personal and household cleaners are written for average water conditions across the country, for water that is, on average, much harder than ours. Have you ever noticed how well soap lathers in the Lower Mainland? Or how clothes quickly discolour or occasionally end

up with a white residue? Or why your skin, and your dog's skin is itchy? Perhaps you have had the dishwasher serviced twice this year. An excess of surfactants is likely the reason. So, what can you do?

Unless the detergent, soap, shampoo or similar cleaning product is specifically designed and/or indicates a measured amount for soft water application, you are using too much. In the Lower Mainland, you can use a lot less than what the manufacturer recommends. Experiment. Whether using powder or liquid, concentrated or regular, natural or conventional, try using half as much as recommended and adjust from there. See how little you really need to get the desired results.

The benefits come out in the wash. By simply reducing the quantity of personal or household cleaning product you use per application, you'll reduce your expenses by 50 percent or more.

Your clothes will look brighter and last longer. Your appliances will last longer and require less maintenance. Irritation of your skin associated with excess surfactants will be reduced or eliminated. The waste-water treatment plants will not be burdened by dealing with unnecessary, excessive levels of surfactants. Fish and other organisms in our waterways will be thankful too.

*Lyn Ross is community services coordinator for the business and community services division at the Greater Vancouver Regional District.*



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As part of the Sustainable Region Initiative (SRI), the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) is working to inform and educate Lower Mainland residents about this unique feature of our water supply and how they can personally benefit, live healthier lives and help protect the natural beauty that surrounds us. For more information, contact the GVRD Information Centre at 604-432-6200 or visit [www.gvrd.bc.ca](http://www.gvrd.bc.ca) or [www.georgiastrait.org](http://www.georgiastrait.org)

### Were you aware?

If it generates suds, it contains surfactants. Whether the personal or household cleaning products you use are organic or chemically manufactured, they all contain biodegradable surfactants as the essential cleaning agent. With our very soft water in the Lower Mainland, we can use far less than what the manufacturer recommends and still obtain the cleaning results we desire.



# Thinking the unthinkable about Canada's future

## Is it time to start using the "f" word?

BY GEOFF OLSON

In the eye-opening film *Hoodwinked: The Myth of Free Trade*, former Liberal prime minister John Turner reflects on the mid-'80s battle over the North American Free Trade Agreement. After a famous heated exchange with Brian Mulroney, Turner lost the battle for Canadian hearts and minds on the divisive trade issue – and their votes in the process.

Turner reflects on how, unlike most politicians, he had read the actual NAFTA agreement. After discovering an absence of binding agreements on such things as monopolies, antidumping, and labour standards, he decided the document had more to do with investment than "free trade."

Cut to 20 years later. Iconic Canadian institutions like Hudson's Bay and the Laurentian Hotel chain have disappeared into the deep pockets of foreign investors. Provincially, it's more of the same. Texas-based Kinder Morgan owns BC's gas delivery system. One third of the operations and services of BC Hydro, our most profitable public company, has been outsourced to Bermuda-based Accenture. The BC Medical Services Plan and Pharmacare are in the hands of American firms. The CEO of the privatized BC Ferries hails from the US, where he presided as vice-president of Covanta Energy, which filed for bankruptcy protection in 2001.

Neo-conservative apologists in academia and media continue to applaud the high levels of direct foreign investment, federally and provincially, even though the bulk of it is in takeovers and acquisitions. Foreign direct investment has more than doubled in Canada since 1990. The Ontario governments' website boasts that "Canada puts no restrictions on the repatriation of capital or profit by foreign investors – one of the reasons the country attracts a high level of foreign investment."

In a speech this January in Utah, former US vice-president Al Gore said "the election in Canada was partly about the tar sands projects in Alberta... and the financial interests behind the tar sands project poured a lot of money and support behind an ultra-conservative leader in order to win the election... and to protect its interests." (Under Chapter 6 of NAFTA, Canada agreed to a "proportional sharing" provision. A fixed proportion of our energy supplies to the United States are guaranteed into the future. Even in the event of a national

crisis, Canada cannot reduce the 65 percent of its oil and 61 percent of its natural gas which it now exports to the US.)

The suspicion that our nation is being bought out from underneath our feet, with complicit or ignorant

Citing publicly available documents, these critics foresee the replacement of Canadian public and private institutions with the cuckoo's egg of a militarized, branch-plant economy, with many of the traditional social welfare roles of government either

to make all of North America their power base acting in their interest only."

Fogal doesn't mince words on the elites' end game for Canada. "It is the end of a nation. It is the end of decisions by ourselves over ourselves. It



silence of big media, appears to have little evidence to contradict it.

In fact, the disassembly of Canada is proceeding on several fronts simultaneously: economic, political, cultural and military. While South American nations are disengaging from the "Washington Consensus," (the IMF/World Bank prescription for open markets described by critics as a Trojan horse for keeping poorer nations in economic servitude), Canada's leaders are doing quite the opposite, bringing us into tighter orbit with the US. A number of informed commentators, among them former Progressive Conservative candidate David Orchard, Connie Fogal of the Canadian Action Party, Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians, and University of Ottawa economics professor Michel Chossudovsky, the overall plan appears to be nothing less than the elimination of Canada in all but name.

eliminated or outsourced to private contractors. It's a choleric vision of a future that's two parts Orwell and one part Huxley, with a shrunken middle class toiling under the thumb of a borderless corporate oligarchy, and monitored by unrestricted electronic surveillance.

In her paper *The Metamorphosis and Sabotage of Canada*, Connie Fogal writes "This union is planned, directed, organized and coordinated by unelected, unaccountable people of the military/industrial complex with a few academic apologists thrown in for good measure. It is being facilitated by all three elected governments. This is the same military/industrial complex that General Eisenhower warned against. This group is creating a despotic regime for the pursuit of their interest (rapacious greed and power) which is diametrically opposed to the needs and interests of the citizens in all three countries. Their plan is

is a reduction of our standard of living: a decline of the middle class, an increase in poverty, homelessness and destruction of our social safety net. It is the militarization of the country. It is the creation of a police state."

Extremist rhetoric from a fringe commentator? Whatever the overall nature of the game, it's undeniable that over the past two decades, an alphabet soup of organizations and agreements have smoothed the path for Canada's absorption into a single North American bloc, with public policy largely dictated by nonelected officials.

The Canadian Council of Chief Executives is the nation's premier business association, composed of the top executives of 150 leading Canadian firms. Formed in 1976, the CCCE promulgated the development of the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement, and of the subsequent North American Free



Trade Agreement. Concerned that fortress America might retreat within its own borders after 9/11, disrupting Canada-US trade, the organization successfully pressured Ottawa to bring Canadian military and security policies in line with those of the US. A "common security perimeter" serves interests that are not just economic. The CCCE's petitioning had the enthusiastic endorsement of the military lobby.

According to Michael Chossudovsky, another piece of bureaucratic DNA for Canada's militaristic mutation came with the formation of the Bi-National Planning Group. Accountable neither to the US Congress nor the Canadian Parliament, the BPG's role transcended electoral governance, and as the name suggests, the BPG had members in both countries. The organization's role was to negotiate Canada's entry into the US Northern Command (Northcom). Its work now largely completed, BPG expired this spring and Canada is now positioned to sign on with Northcom.

Michel Chossudovsky writes that "Canada's participation in the Bilateral Planning Group and hence the Northern Command implies Canada's acceptance not only of Star Wars, but of the entire US war agenda, requiring significant hikes in Canada's defence spending. The latter are intended to fuel the military-industrial complex. Canada's defence contractors are supportive of this process."

One should not think of this as a partisan issue, or a phenomenon brought into being solely by the famously American-friendly Harper government. The federal Liberals have danced to this tune for some time, and the cross-border tango of mutual interests remains the same, even if the political venues have changed. It's true that Prime Minister Chretien offered resistance to the more extreme aspects of this wheeling and dealing, as did Paul Martin (ie refusing to join in Star Wars and the war in Iraq), but it also appears the leaders' public antiwar stance proved incompatible with the overall pursuit of economic and military ties with the US.

The Independent Task Force for North America, organized by the business elites of the US, Mexico and Canada, was lead by Canada's own former Liberal deputy prime minister, John Manley. Last spring, Manley's task force released its Trinational Call for a North American Economic and Security Community by 2010. A united continental bloc will share a common approach to trade, energy, immigration, law enforcement and security.

Also in March of 2005, Prime Minister Martin, President Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox signed the Security and Prosperity Partnership agreement, which is the general agreement on "deep integration"

between the US, Canada and Mexico. According to Fogal, the leaders then assigned three cabinet ministers in their respective countries to implement the deal, among them David Emerson, then Liberal minister of industry.

Emerson's bureaucratic role in the US-Canada relationship may explain his high value to the Harper government, if indeed his role transcends any partisan considerations. His primary role may be not so much governmental as extra-governmental. This offers an explanation for Emerson's change of allegiance from Liberal to Conservative within hours of the federal election. Hence his shock at the post-election outcry from his nominal constituents, who had the audacity to believe that voting means something.

The meeting of the "Three Amigos" in Cancun last March (Bush, Fox, and Harper in his Empire-friendly military jacket) was simply more of the same. The media focused on the photo ops, while politely failing to mention the particulars of the meeting. The silence was in large part due to the fact that deep integration is proceeding with the ignorance of most elected representatives. According to Jerome R. Corsi in a report in WorldNetDaily.com, working groups in all three nations are busy turning the Security and Prosperity Partnership agreement into reality. Determining the names of the officials involved in the working groups has proved to be difficult.

So is this all just a conspiracy theory, a paranoid extrapolation from the US/Canada "business-as-usual"? Corsi refers to a task report by The Council on Foreign Relations which presented a blueprint for expanding the SPP agreement into a North American Union that would merge the US, Canada and Mexico into a superstate/trading bloc. "The CFR task force report called for establishment of a common security border perimeter around North America by 2010, along with free movement of people, commerce and capital within North America, facilitated by the development of a North American border pass that would replace a US passport for travel between the US, Canada and Mexico."

"Also envisioned by the CFR task force report were a North American court, a North American inter-parliamentary group, a North American executive commission, a North American military defense command, a North American customs office and a North American development bank."

Sceptics may ask, so what's the big deal? Canada has to be "competitive" in the New World Order, and if lumbering dinosaurs like The Hudson's Bay Co. can't compete with neighborhood-nuking behemoths

*continued on p.34*

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## Quantum leap

THE POWER OF NOW • ECKHART TOLLE

The time-bound mode of consciousness is deeply embedded in the human psyche. But what we are doing here is part of a profound transformation that is taking place in the collective consciousness of the planet and beyond: the awakening of consciousness from the dream of matter, form and separation – the ending of time.

We are breaking mind patterns that have dominated human life for eons – mind patterns that have created unimaginable suffering on a vast scale. I am not using the word evil. It is more helpful to call it unconsciousness or insanity.

“This breaking up of the old mode of consciousness, or rather, unconsciousness – is it something we have to do or will it happen anyway? I mean, is this change inevitable?”

That’s a question of perspective. The doing and the happening are in fact a single process. Because you are one with the totality of consciousness, you cannot separate the two, but there is no absolute guarantee that humans will make it.

The process isn’t inevitable or automatic. Your cooperation is an essential part of it. However you look at it, it is a quantum leap in the evolution of consciousness, as well as our only chance of survival as a species.

To find out if you have allowed yourself to be taken over by psychological time, you can use a simple criterion. Ask yourself: “Is there joy, ease and lightness in what I am doing?” If there isn’t, then time is covering up the present moment and life is perceived as a burden or a struggle.

If there is no joy, ease or lightness in what you are doing, it does not necessarily mean that you need to change what you are doing. It may be sufficient to change the “how.” How is always more important than “what.” See if you can give much more attention to the doing than to the result you want to achieve.

Give your fullest attention to whatever the moment presents. This implies that you also completely accept what is, because you cannot give your full attention to something and at the same time resist it.

As soon as you honour the present moment, all unhappiness and struggle dissolve and life begins to flow with joy and ease. When you act out of present-moment awareness, whatever you do becomes imbued with a sense of quality, care and love, even the simplest action.

So do not be concerned with the fruit of your action; just give attention to the action itself. The fruit will come of its own accord. This is a powerful spiritual practice. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, one of the oldest and most beautiful, spiritual teachings in

existence, non-attachment to the fruit of your action is called karma yoga. It is described as the path of “consecrated action.”

When the compulsive striving ceases, the joy of Being flows into everything you do. The moment your attention turns to the Now, you

feel a presence, a stillness, a peace. You no longer depend on the future for fulfillment and satisfaction; you don’t look to it for salvation. Neither failure, nor success, has the power to change your inner state of Being. You have found the life underneath your life situation.

As far as your life situation is concerned, there may be things to be attained or acquired. That’s the world of form, and of gain and loss. Yet on a deeper level, you are already complete, and when you realize that, there is a playful, joyous energy behind what you do.

When your deeper sense of self is derived from Being, neither your happiness, nor your sense of self, depends on the outcome and there is freedom from fear. You don’t seek permanency where it cannot be found.

Everything is honoured, but nothing matters. Forms are born and they die, and yet you are aware of the eternal underneath the forms. You know that nothing real can be threatened. When this is your state of Being, how can you not succeed? You have succeeded already.

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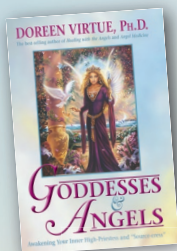
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# Anxiety is ego's shadow

UNIVERSE WITHIN • GWEN RANDALL-YOUNG

In my practice, I treat many people for anxiety, which probably everyone has experienced at some time in their lives. In certain situations, anxiety is normal: when someone close to us experiences a sudden serious illness, if we have momentarily lost sight of our young child, or there is a terrorist threat.

Many people, however, suffer anxiety over the ordinary events of life, and I became curious about how we could understand anxiety from the perspective of ego and soul. It seems clear to me that anxiety is an ego reaction, based on fear.

While in scientific terms, the opposite of an anxious state would be a relaxed state, in ego and soul terms, the opposite of anxiety is trust. I say this because when we experience anxiety, it is generally because we do not feel in control of a situation. We

fear things will not turn out the way we hope and that we will experience loss, failure or embarrassment.

Ego, as we well know, has a mind of its own. It experiences the world in terms of good/bad, right/wrong, win/lose and other polar opposites. For ego, it is as though life is full of coin tosses, and ego wants to win the flip every time. Statistically, this is impossible, so ego must work in a variety of ways to achieve the outcome it desires. If the outcome is not guaranteed, ego begins to fret.

Not only does ego worry about the outcome, but it also conjures up all manner of consequences that would follow an undesirable result. Hence, this kind of thinking: "If he doesn't ask me out, I'll probably be alone for the rest of my life. Then I will undoubtedly struggle financially, and end up being a bag-lady."

Or, "If my child disobeys me when he is five, what will he be like at 15? He'll probably have a bad attitude and get in with the wrong crowd. Then he'll get into drugs and end up on the street." These catastrophic, ego-based prophecies are a perfect formula for generating anxiety.

If we come from the perspective of soul, our world looks and feels different. Soul recognizes that our lives

## SPIRITUALITY

unfold and that our circumstances form the curriculum of study for this lifetime. Things will not always go according to our plan. That would be too easy.

Rather, life will surprise, disappoint, confound, dismay and puzzle us. Just when you think you have it all figured out, it changes. We learn that we can either play it safe, sticking with the familiar, or we can take risks, try new things and stretch ourselves.

The choice is not always ours. Unplanned occurrences can reshape us in ways we never dreamed possible. Sometimes, the worst thing that could have happened to us turns out to be the best thing that ever happened.

It is easy to see why this is a difficult, challenging and frustrating game for ego to play. There really are no rules one can count on. Ego only frustrates, worries and agitates itself, trying to beat the system.

Soul, on the other hand, trusts the big picture. Soul accepts that life will be an interesting adventure and we will win some and lose some. That doesn't matter so much, as long as we are growing, learning and gaining wisdom, perhaps even enlightenment.

Soul patiently waits to see how long ego will struggle before figuring it out. Soul knows that ego needs only to surrender in order to cease the struggle. When ego does surrender, life becomes calmer, smoother and more relaxed. Life is still what it was; life was never the problem. The difference is that ego has given up resisting the irresistible.

As for anxiety, the minute we surrender, release our attachments and trust in the flow of life, it disappears, for it was never real. It was only ego's shadow.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For more articles and information about her books and CDs, visit [www.gwen.ca/](http://www.gwen.ca/). (See display ad this issue.)

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# BC energy future at risk

BY CHARLES J. WALTER

If Ottawa decided to take control of BC's and the rest of Canada's ten provinces energy grids there would be a huge political hue and cry from all Premiers in defence of their provinces control over energy and energy transmission. Just witness the current demands by resource rich province such as Alberta to keep the feds national equalization hands off oil income. On April 4, 2006, the North American Electric Reliability Council of the United States (NERC), which was created by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission of the US (FERC), applied simultaneously to all 10 provinces to regulate Canada's electrical transmission grid. NERC will be headquartered in Washington, DC and its current board of two Canadians (including a former BC Hydro director) and eight Americans are representatives of the private and public electrical utilities that make up NERC.

Canada is the largest supplier to the US of total energy, when oil, natural gas and electricity are combined. Wars are being fought today over this scale of energy capacity.

Forty five years ago, when Premier W.A.C. Bennett nationalized BC's hydroelectric generating and transmission capacity, his government created for the citizens of BC a legacy of low cost power, which supported private economic and community development as well as providing substantial direct and long-term financial benefits to BC's treasury.

In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson arrived with a cheque for \$250 million and the Columbia River Treaty was ratified. BC Hydro built great dams and an integrated electrical transmission system. BC began to export huge amounts of electrical power to the US and the integrated western North American energy grid, from northern BC to southern California was created. The BC government was allowed to sell 50 percent of the downstream benefits for 30 years to build the Columbia Treaty dams and reservoirs. BC taxpayers took on the debt, paid the lion's share of the costs and finally the downstream benefits returned to BC in 1998 in the form of 1,170 megawatts of now higher-value, open-market saleable power. That's enough power to take care of roughly 2.2 million homes.

In 1991, California's misguided ideological market commitment to privatize its power and the treacherous corporate tentacles of the likes of Enron, drove California to the edge of bankruptcy. BC Hydro along with other long term and loyal power generators were accused of market manipulation (they were subsequent-

ly exonerated by FERC of any wrongdoing in 2003). California followed up with a billion-dollar lawsuit in 2005. BC Hydro called it legal blackmail. The suit never made headway.

Unbridled private competitive electrical companies, the California experience showed, do not act for the greater good. In response to California's near death financial nightmare, the US Federal Energy Regulatory Commission stepped in and used the crisis to force much needed efficiencies in the US generation and electrical transmission system. FERC observed that the US needed to create an open access highway for electrical power transmission and generation.

*For what it says are "domestic energy security reasons," the United States Department of Energy has applied to control Canada's entire electrical transmission grid. In the West the DoE hopes to prevent brownouts in states such as California by tapping into more BC electricity to feed the power-hungry US system.*

British Columbia, which is coupled with the US western continental system, has a different type of electrical generation and transmission system altogether from that in the US. Bennett's "nationalized" BC electrical grid was already an open highway and integrated, albeit under the Crown control of BC Hydro. Further, BC Hydro had an enormous advantage with its dams, which act as huge batteries generating instant power at peak demand times.

Bennett knew how to control power for BC back in the '60s, but this is now the NAFTA 21st century, and FERC decided that BC should comply with United States energy system law. Shortly after 911, Premier Gordon Campbell met with US Vice-President Dick Cheney; energy security was on the US agenda. FERC then requested BC split up its unified electrical system in compliance with the new US rules.

Campbell, no doubt under considerable pressure, mandated a policy directive rather than pass a law. The BC Transmission Company was then set up and BC Hydro became a generator only. Campbell however went even further and his government policy said all new BC power would now come from private sector independent power producers (IPPs). The BC Utilities Commission, which was cancelled by the previous NDP government, was re-established by the Campbell government to regulate the

two new utilities and IPPs in the best interest of the people of BC.

At the same time NERC made its application to regulate all of Canada's grid, the BC Utilities Commission made a ruling which matches FERC's US power transmission rules on new transmission and financing. This created a private sector financing structure on the backs of British Columbia Transmission Company's (BCTC) core public assets. In sum, the fracturing of the once great BC Hydro is well under way.

BC is 12 percent short this year of being able to meet its own electrical needs. To secure its energy future, BC needs to create new generation for itself, and the US. BC also needs to rebuild its grid.

Private companies control the titles to the best BC wind and tidal energy locations, which were original-

last employer was David Emerson at Canfor. Emerson, as a Liberal and now as a Conservative, is a core member of the North American committee working out the Security and Prosperity Partnership details. Yorkovitch's new job comes with a \$3 million public relations budget as well. No doubt something's up in the premier's office on the multibillion dollar BC energy file. With the direct connect to BC Hydro via Yorkovitch along with the recent sale of Terasen Gas and the contradictory cancellation of Site C and the Island's Duke Point generating project, Campbell has clearly signalled now that he is prepared to intervene politically and take the lead, albeit very unevenly.

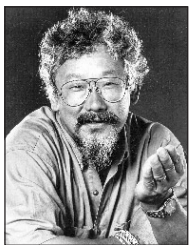
This was not his position when he started out as premier. Something's changed and the urgency level has gone up. He has been told by the best and the brightest on his elite BC Progress Board that BC's number one priority is energy. It's the same energy priority Bennett dealt with. His inner advisors have for six years been consistently unimaginative and weak on the energy file and his minister of energy has kept a narrow focus on the cash flow from hydrocarbons including methane fields and coal. The only minister in cabinet with a good grip on BC's renewable future is Environment Minister Penner, in a junior portfolio. BC has lost a decade and is well behind on its renewable energy potential. Both the NDP and the Liberals have left BC Hydro to ossify at the board level and in the executive suites resulting in tremendous lack of vision, creative capacity and lost opportunity.

The stakes are in the double-digit, multi-billion-dollar range, and the risks are who controls BC Hydro, the BC water table, and its renewable energy generating assets; and for whose future economic benefit?

Keep a focused eye this August 4, on BC Hydro's headquarters for a clear indication of how BC's energy future will look after it opens the IPP bids. Structure determines destiny and the shape of BC Hydro's interface with the independent power producers will be critical. Particularly watch Powerex's (BC Hydro's sacred trading arm) position and the BCH, BCTC and BCUC boards and executive suites for new appointments. Oh, and listen carefully to Yorkovitch's comments coming from the premier's office.

*For further information and background see the film: Enron, The Smartest Guys in the Room and visit: [www.commonfrontiers.ca/Single\\_Page\\_Docs/News\\_Items/Apr13\\_05\\_Foster.html](http://www.commonfrontiers.ca/Single_Page_Docs/News_Items/Apr13_05_Foster.html). [www.powerex.com/about/facts.html](http://www.powerex.com/about/facts.html). [www.neb-one.gc.ca/PublicInterest-Footer\\_e.htm](http://www.neb-one.gc.ca/PublicInterest-Footer_e.htm) (National Energy Board of Canada) [www.ferc.gov/about/com-mem/kelliher](http://www.ferc.gov/about/com-mem/kelliher) (background on the chair of FERC) [www.NERC.com/](http://www.NERC.com/).*





# Ads promote pollution

SCIENCE MATTERS • DAVID SUZUKI

One of the benefits of being Canadian is that we aren't subject to all the oddities of US culture. At the same time, we are not always aware of that same culture's most bizarre and unique features.

I'd put the US's big, "free-market" think tanks in that category. These organizations, funded largely by "big industry," come up with all sorts of unusual claims and statements to justify the status quo, and to make sure that big, profitable, polluting industries continue to be big, profitable, polluting industries.

The latest comes from the Competitive Enterprise Institute with two 30-second television ads appearing in cities across the US. The ads are so over the top, they almost parody themselves.

In one ad, over beautiful scenes of children playing in a park, a woman's soothing voice intones: "There's something in these pictures you can't see. It's essential to life... The fuels that produce CO<sub>2</sub> have freed us from a world of backbreaking labour. Now, some politicians want to label carbon

dioxide a pollutant. Imagine if they succeed. What would our lives be like then?"

Another ad attacks the media and environmental groups for being alarmist: "You've seen those headlines about global warming. The glaciers are

*In one ad, over beautiful scenes of children playing in a park, a woman's soothing voice intones: "There's something in these pictures you can't see. It's essential to life... The fuels that produce CO<sub>2</sub> have freed us from a world of backbreaking labour."*

melting. We're doomed. That's what several studies supposedly found. But other scientific studies found exactly the opposite. Greenland's glaciers are

growing, not melting. The Antarctic ice sheet is getting thicker, not thinner. Did you see any big headlines about that? Why are they trying to scare us? Global warming alarmists claim the glaciers are melting because of the carbon dioxide from the fuels we use."

Unbelievable. "Several studies." "Supposedly found." My favourite line appears above a shot of some poor soul riding a bike in a blizzard: "Let's force people to cut back, they say."

Each of these ads ends with the clever tagline: "Carbon dioxide. They call it pollution. We call it life." Have a look at the ads at <http://streams.cei.org/>.

The second ad shows glimpses of scientific papers about ice sheets, and the papers speed past quickly enough that most people would just assume that they must bolster the commercial's argument.

If you track down the papers, they actually don't. The first paper points out: "There is nonetheless considerable evidence of melting and thinning in the coastal marginal areas in recent years."

The latter notes: "... these observations are consistent with the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) prediction for Antarctica's likely response to a warming, global climate." Not exactly smoking guns against the case for global

warming.

Environmental groups have long been castigated for their alarmism about global warming, so such alarmist rhetoric from the opposite camp is quite ironic. What is driving the industry groups to make these ads now?

In a review of Al Gore's film about global warming, *An Inconvenient Truth*, the science journal *Nature* called the ads "arguably hilarious" and noted that they are plainly a response to the publicity Gore has been getting for his film.

That may be true, as Mr. Gore's film has received wide acclaim. But more generally, the ads are probably a response to the growing concern about global warming and other environmental problems not being adequately addressed in both the US and Canada.

President Bush barely acknowledges that there is a problem at all, and Prime Minister Harper has risked Canada's international reputation by refusing to live up to our Kyoto pledge.

Public anger has spurred industry groups to launch their "everything is fine; nothing to see here" messages. The question is, how long will an informed public put up with inaction from industry and political leaders?

Join the Nature Challenge and learn more at [www.davidsuzuki.org/](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/).

## Eagleridge Bluffs ain't over yet, folks!

BY NED JACOBS

Two days before protestors were arrested at Eagleridge Bluffs this spring, 31 BC environmental scientists and consultants sent an open letter to Premier Campbell. "We cannot remain silent in the face of the sub-standard environmental management practices currently applied to, what your own government has referred to, as 'the most unique ecosystem in the Sea to Sky corridor'..."

They criticized the province for accepting "piecemeal" management plans which "do not consider critical interactions and dependencies between adjacent ecosystems," and warned that "the Eagleridge coastal bluff arbutus grove will not survive in its present form if fragmented by a major highway."

They also charged that provincial laws, federal laws and the international convention protecting migratory birds while nesting, are being violated due to "no known mitigation measures," and because "contracted environmental consultants have been too cursory to identify active nests." The scientists also said that the 2003 Environmental Assessment is "deficient in scope and content," does not refer to "rare and endangered...plant

communities" and the "blue-listed northern red-legged frog known to occupy the Larsen Creek wetlands." Baseline surveys were not carried out during all four seasons, and "a proper and thorough rewriting of the 2003 EA is essential."



The diversion clearcut just above the highway

Professional integrity drove two leading international tunnelling and road construction consultants, Evert Hoek and Clair Harry Murdock, to write the premier that in their experience (which is vast) a four-lane divided tunnel would be safer and probably less costly than Kevin Falcon's steep, winding, fog-shrouded overland route. The transportation minister ("minister responsible for promoting sprawl and car sales" would be more accurate) could not suppress the letter, which was also endorsed by

nine prominent engineers.

These objections and many other appeals ran into a concrete barrier in Campbell and Falcon, who would not budge in their decision to force the 5 km Eagleridge diversion of the Sea to Sky highway on West Vancouver and

on either side of the clearcut.

Residents in earshot said it was agonizing to listen, day after day, to the clear-cutting of those exquisite groves. And for what? After more than two years of struggle, protestors knew at last that their well-informed arguments had fallen on deaf ears because the purpose of the overland route – indeed the entire Sea to Sky upgrade – is not to improve safety or even speed traffic to Whistler for the 2010 Winter Games. Those excuses allowed the government to accelerate the project by four years, which according to the auditor general has increased costs by more than half a billion dollars.

The prime motive is now clear. It is real estate development. After a government spokesperson denied there had been discussions, in June *The Province* newspaper quoted a confidential letter by West Vancouver's environmental co-ordinator which said: "...It has come to our attention that the Ministry of Transportation and the private landowner [British Properties] are negotiating access from this new road to their land." For what? A sprawling development of 1,800 luxury houses.

continued on p.14



# Oh no, Canada!

BY CINDY SHEEHAN

*I like to believe that people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than our governments. Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it.*

— Dwight D. Eisenhower



The day that the apparently reformed warmonger president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, envisioned decades ago has finally come. It's time for governments to get out of our way.

I have had the chance, since Camp Casey in August, to travel the world. I have also had the honour of meeting hundreds of fellow souls who are just plain sick and tired of the way Bush & Company are cavorting around the world, fledgling Third Reich tyrants, (Hitler didn't need warrants either), threatening the way of life of every person who inhabits our world.

From Italy to Canada to Great Britain and all the nations that send soldiers to war in the Middle East, our global brothers and sisters are tired of their governments' support of Bush-Co with their war crimes and crimes against humanity. Former prime minister Berlusconi of Italy recently paid a high price for his support of Bush-Co's policies by not being re-elected. I knew he was going to be defeated when I was travelling around Italy and feeling voters' frustration and hearing their fear of losing a democracy, which Berlusconi's neo-fascist

rule was destroying.

By many accounts Stephen Harper became prime minister through the collapse of weak coalitions and a Liberal government fraud scandal. He now heads a minority government, yet he is unpopular from coast to Canadian coast, and there is a growing sense of unease about his emulation of a very unpopular person in the USA, George W. Bush.

Canadians have to be the healthiest looking and most polite citizenry I have encountered in my travels. While the British people I have met are very polite, they have nowhere near the graciousness of Canadians; Canadians are truly civil.

Canadians have been proud of their country's role as world peacekeeper and beacon of peace and hope; a refuge for us Americans who feel that the USA's aggressive militarism endangers us and harms our reputations and souls.

Now Canadians also need to wake up to the fact that their new disliked, minority government is leading them down the same slippery slope towards fascistic militarism exemplified by their immediate neighbours to the south.

The first day that I was in Canada Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor signed onto an extension of the NORAD treaty with the Bush regime, without debate or any vote in Parliament. The citizenry was outraged, in its courteous way.

Not so coincidentally, O'Connor just so happens to be a former defence industry lobbyist who has been using his position to promote the "Canada First" position, which would ultimately remove Canada, once and for all, from its world-peacekeeping role. With Canada's support of the Haitian government's overthrow and support of BushCo's travesty in Afghanistan, Canada was already heading down the path of destruction.

Canadians are distressed that defence spending rose by \$5.3 billion (roughly what the US spends for two weeks in Iraq) at the same time the preschool budget is being cut, and college tuition is rising.

This increase in military spending correlates with a push to recruit thousands more soldiers who are,



ironically, still being told by the Canadian recruiters that their country only does peacekeeping missions. There is a manipulation of facts, exploitation of fear and false patriotism, which is fueled by the Canadian media, which seem to be turning, for the most part, into propaganda tools of the government, à la the US right-wing Fourth Estate.

However, with Canadian soldiers dying in combat, the citizens of the country are starting to question their Bush clone of a prime minister and his Bush-style cabinet. Recently, the PM said that if he sends troops into combat he expects popular support. Which only means that he expects the people to support him and his loose

own Cindy Sheehan to go to the PM's residence and demand to know what noble cause her child died for, or is still fighting for.

Even more of a struggle right now to Canadian peace coalitions, besides Canada's apparent slumber, is that your government won't support war resisters who flee the US military; resisters who don't want to go to Iraq and kill innocent people, or die for the war profiteers. So far, two soldiers have been denied asylum. I was told by members of a few Canadian political parties that asylum is being denied for two reasons: first, because US soldiers are now "volunteers," and secondly, because if our kids refuse to go to Iraq and face incarceration, well,

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*Canadians have to be the ... most polite citizenry I have encountered in my travels. While the British people I have met are very polite, they have nowhere near the graciousness of Canadians; Canadians are truly civil.*

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interpretation of the facts.

Also, the Canadian media is now banned from attending ceremonies at the Trenton airbase where flag-draped coffins first arrive with dead soldiers. Allegedly to not cause the families any more pain. But, as the mother of a soldier who came home that way, trust me, it causes far more pain to have your child KIA in a pointless war than it does to see the military honour guard treating our children with the care and respect not afforded to them by their own misleaders.

Recent polls in Canada show that the people are starting to wake up by the truckload. Support for their administration's backing of Bush-Co's war has slipped 14 percentage points in two months! Canadians are seeing that the war in Afghanistan is not righteous, and that when Canada sends troops there it frees US troops to be illegally and immorally deployed to Iraq. Canada needs its

American prisons aren't that bad.

I have said and written about this before: if our kids volunteered, then they should be free to "un-volunteer" if the mission of the organization changes. I have belonged to several volunteer organizations and when I disagree, or when I just feel like it, I leave. I have not been threatened with prison, or execution, which is an option for the US military in times of war.

Most of our kids did not volunteer to go to Iraq in order to guard oil and other "special" contractors, nor did they go to kill innocent people and pad the retirement of the Exxon CEO. And – newsflash – our recruiters are still lying to our young people, telling them that if they enlist they won't have to go to Iraq, this comes along with other despicable lies. When the recruit signs on the dotted line, the contract becomes binding only on him or her. These kinds of unilateral



contracts are not even legal.

Our young soldiers, if they are refugees fleeing an organization that does not reflect their values, should not have to go to prison, no matter what the conditions are. With Amnesty International saying that violations are rampant in "enemy" combatant detention centres, why should Canada think that its soldiers are any better off in a place that they should not be in the first place.

Please, dear Canada, stop the slide before it is too late, and you wake up in a country that you don't even know anymore. We, here in the US, fell into an exhausted sleep of denial after Vietnam, and we are now reaping what was silently and deviously sown by the right wing radicals who have been working for an overthrow of our government for more than 30 years. If we didn't learn the lessons of Vietnam, we will surely never forget the lessons we learned at the feet of BushCo that have cost so many so much. It's OK to copy our baseball and acknowledge the huge hearts of the American people who never wanted to picture the country that we have become. But please don't copy, or let your government be willing partners in crime with our public enemy number one: BushCo.

After a news conference that I conducted with the Canadian War Resister's League, the media was grilling a

Canadian cabinet minister. Finally in frustration he blurted out: "We're not going to allow an American woman (me) to dictate our policies." And, you know what, he's right. But, with support rapidly dwindling for both wars (the Iraq war was never popular with the people of Canada) and with Canadian support for the asylum of our young men and women of conscience from the US, it's time for the Canadian government to listen to its people.

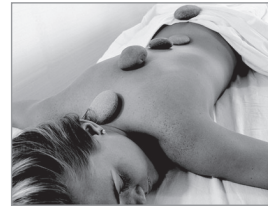
It's time for all of our governments to listen to us. George and Steve and Tony and the rest of you warmongers: Get out of our way – we the people want peace. We will have it. Please join me and sign the Voters for Peace pledge and spread the word far and wide. Our goal is to get 2 million voters to sign the pledge – so we can go back to these legislators and candidates and say, "We will no longer tolerate your wars!"

*Cindy Sheehan is a co-founder of Gold Star Families for Peace (www.gsfp.org) and the mother of Casey Sheehan, who was killed in Iraq. Voters for Peace (votersforpeace.org/) is a joint project of Gold Star Families for Peace, Democracy Rising, Peace Action, Code Pink, United for Peace and Justice, and more, all working to bring the peace movement together to think and act as voters.*

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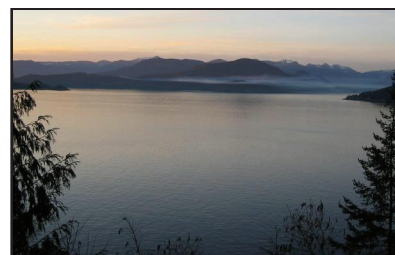


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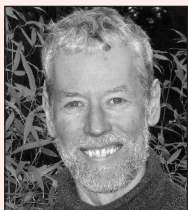
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# Winning the cancer game

EARTHFUTURE • GUY DAUNCEY

There are many ways to describe how the world came to be so affected by cancer. Describing the widespread pollution of the world by toxic chemicals is one way. Here is another way, which is equally as important.

It starts with farming 200 years ago and the German chemist Justus von Liebig (1803-1873), who wondered what soil was made from. So he burnt some. Because the ashes contained nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus, farmers began feeding their soil with fertilizer instead of organic matter. This has led to a dramatic loss of minerals. From 1940 to 2002, plants grown on modern farms have lost 47 percent of their iron, 21 percent of their magnesium and 100 percent of their copper. (Except when they are grown organically.) Humans: 0 – cancer cells: 1

The plants are now more susceptible to insects and pests, so farmers treat them with pesticides and fungicides. This seems to make the problem go away, but plants have evolved over millions of years and are

extraordinarily successful at fighting off disease. When they sense an attack coming, they generate phytonutrients to defend themselves. When we eat them, we acquire their disease-fighting qualities. When the plants are no longer attacked, they don't generate the phytonutrients, so even if we eat our five servings of fruit and veggies a day, they won't contain the disease-fighting properties we need. (Unless they have been grown organically.) Humans: 0 – cancer cells: 2

Our bodies need selenium too; it's a natural cancer-fighting agent. But the fertilizers bind to the selenium, inhibiting its uptake by plants. Mercury pollution and acid rain from burning fossil fuels also inhibit its uptake. Humans: 0 – cancer cells: 3

The food is harvested, but since the phytonutrients, known as salvestrols, give fruit juice a bitter taste, and we prefer a sweet, smooth taste, they are removed by the bottlers. We also ship much of our fruit and vegetables in from Florida and California, where they are picked before they are ripe, and before they have had a chance to

develop salvestrols. Humans: 0 – cancer cells: 4

Meanwhile, people are eating more meat. This is good news for the cancer cells, because meat gives nowhere near the protection that plant foods do. Wherever people eat a vegetarian diet, they have less cancer. Humans: 0 – Cancer cells: 5

What else do we eat? Sugar, of course! The average North American consumes 150 pounds of sugar, sucrose and fructose a year. This requires the pancreas to produce more insulin, raising our level of blood sugar, which the body stores as fat. The fat sends weird messages to our hormones (another cause of cancer) and sucks up toxic chemicals such as PCBs and chemical flame-retardants. This is great news for the cancer cells. Humans: 0 – cancer cells: 6

Because many people don't like to get fat, however, the food industry uses sweeteners made from aspartame, which has "Warning: Cancer!" written all over it. Humans: 0 – cancer cells: 7

By now, we're getting busy, so we sit our kiddies by the TV where the average child watches a junk food commercial every five minutes. By two years of age, 20 percent of our babies are eating candy every day. The lack of exercise, combined with the sugar intake, makes them overweight. Then we feed them hot dogs, contain-

ing nitrite additives that form carcinogens. Humans: 0 – cancer cells: 8

Meanwhile, we are cooking our meat at high temperatures, eating baked goods and using microwaves. All this generates acrylamides, which are known to cause cancer in animals. Our fruits and veggies often have pesticide residues (unless they have been grown organically), and our soft drinks contain ingredients that form benzene, another potent carcinogen. To make the junk food taste better, industry adds chemical colourants, flavourings and preservatives. Humans: 0 – cancer cells: 9

And finally, many mothers do all this during pregnancy, feeding their growing babies the worst possible diet. And still too many mothers fail to breastfeed, depriving their children of their full immune system development. Humans: 0 – cancer cells: 10

The way to turn the game around? Stop all the nonsense. Eat fresh, home-prepared, locally grown, organic, vegetarian food – raw where possible – with all its minerals, vitamins, phytonutrients, antioxidants and salvestrols intact. Humans: 10 – cancer cells: 0

Guy Dauncey is co-chair of Prevent Cancer Now ([www.preventcancer-now.ca](http://www.preventcancer-now.ca)) and editor of EcoNews ([www.earthfuture.com/econews](http://www.earthfuture.com/econews)). He lives in Victoria, BC. For information on salvestrols, visit [www.salvestrols.ca/](http://www.salvestrols.ca/).



# On track zodiac

JULY 2006 • ILONA HEDI GRANIK



ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Life is dynamic and exciting, as you step into a period of balance and serendipity. Timely actions lead to lucky breaks and encounters of the benevolent kind. Seems you have been making all the right connections. Working with those who need you will lift your spirits even higher.



TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 21)

A transformation of your energy occurs, as you begin an inward journey toward change. Your relationships deepen and take on new meaning. Whether they are of a tantric or casual nature, relationships can be stimulating, although the tendency may be toward the more highly evolved realms.



GEMINI (May 22 – Jun 20)

Could be that you have possibly forgotten the benefit of treating your body like a temple. A wake-up call comes in the way of health matters. You will discover much about how your thoughts create your awareness. You can make better choices now. Breathe and dance your way to longevity.



CANCER (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

Unless you channel your adrenalin, you could find yourself easily agitated and feeling defeated. You would do well to plan on paper, imagine and build a treasure map of your desired outcomes. Productivity will have to simmer on the back burners, but creatively you will soar, even as you adjust until the end of the month.



LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

You will either become irritated or highly motivated, depending on how you utilize the strong energies at hand. This is a dynamic time to expend real energy toward making things work and getting work done. The god of war is also the god of ambition and confidence. Planetary influences are strongly aligned in Leo.



VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

Take inventory of every facet of your life and define what is important to you. A new approach to your work ethic catches your attention now; be creative, because in the

following year many transits will affect the status quo. Don't cut short your true feelings about success.



LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

You may feel that you are sliding back into the past, just when you felt you were advancing in life. A significant mentor-type could arrive to assist you in your business plans. Seek consultation and wisdom, as you will only improve your finances. Education is worth its weight in gold.



SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Your principles and faith, once neglected, show up to reveal what you need to re-establish and what you need to learn in your life. If you don't walk your talk, your walk will be steep and arduous. One lesson after the next, you find that what you previously knew to be the inspiration of your truth has returned for renewal.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

Your intuition is strong now and you can feel that your direction is clear. You can take charge of your life and feel that what you do with it has greater meaning. A calm serenity is also yours, as you feel empowered by your true nature growing within your consciousness.



CAPRICORN (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

If you feel bombarded by anxiety or feelings of self-belittlement, you need to gather yourself and come clean. Discover the inner saboteur and the thoughts that undermine your relationships. This is not a time to hide, but a time to seek ways that empower you and lighten your load.



AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 19)

You may decide to drop all seriousness in your self-expression and form new, unusual relationships. Throwing caution to the wind, you may find yourself in some rather unique circumstances. Your jump in first and think later attitude is fast becoming a new strategy. All this in an effort to bring more inspired moments into your personal life.



PISCES (Feb 20 – Mar 20)

A brief respite comes as you lie back on a rubber raft in the ocean of experience. A long-awaited time of leisure and gathering with friends and family could be in the cards. Activity has been high and will continue through the coming months, so grab a vacation while you can.

Ilona Hedi Granik is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 31 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing. [iamilona@gmail.com](mailto:iamilona@gmail.com). [www.heartlightcentre.com/](http://www.heartlightcentre.com/).



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Bodywork.....	25	Food .....	27	Personal Growth.....	29	Spiritual Practices .....	31
Business Services .....	25	Health & Healing.....	27	Psychology, Therapy &		Time Out & Rentals.....	31
Dentistry.....	25	Intuitive Arts .....	28	Counselling.....	29	Vegetarian Restaurants ...	30

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fying importance of another order of reality.

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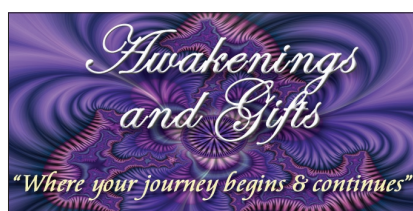
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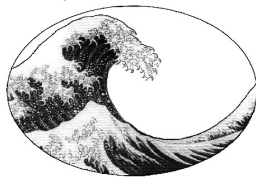
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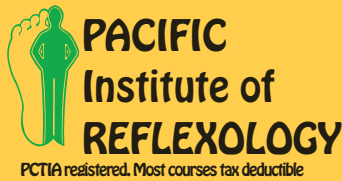


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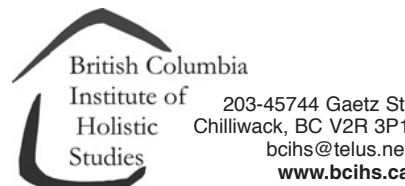


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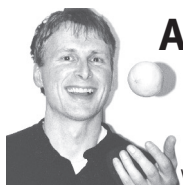
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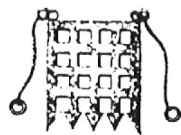


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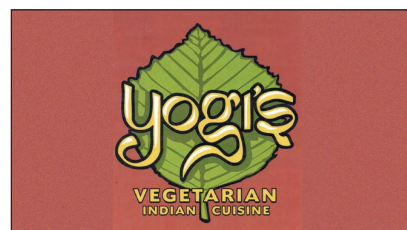


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– Unknown

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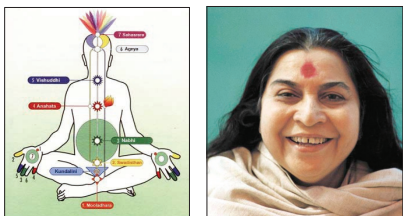
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**WEDNESDAY EVENTS** 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm • **HEALING** 7 pm  
**SUNDAY SERVICES** 11:00 am – See DATEBOOK: Sundays

**WELSH MEDIUM LEAH BOND, SNU**  
**Demonstrations September 27 & October 11, 2006**  
Tix \$25 advance only • 604-433-6663 or 604-945-5110  
The ISA is a Spiritualist church and a teaching centre. We offer Sunday services; demonstrations of mediumship; spiritual healing; hospital & hospice visits; counselling; marriage & union ceremonies; naming services; funeral & memorial services; lectures and workshops; development circles.  
Wednesday Eve Programs resume September 6, 2006



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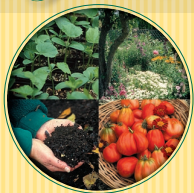
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# DATEBOOK

List at: [www.commonground.ca](http://www.commonground.ca) > Advertising > Datebook

JUL 6-9

**Our Way Home Peace Event & Reunion:** The peace movement converges in the community of Brilliant in Castlegar as war resisters reunite with the Canadians who supported them. Speakers include George McGovern, Arun Gandhi, Tom Hayden, Napalm victim Kim Phuc and many others. Unveiling of sculptor Naomi Lewis' work The Welcoming. [www.ourwayhomepeace.com/](http://www.ourwayhomepeace.com/). Tickets through Ticketmaster 250-860-1470.

JUL 7-14

**Ceremonial Weeklong Nature Retreat** for healing and growth. Dream Blazer Shamanic Medicine, 604-288-7114, [dreamblazer@shaw.ca](mailto:dreamblazer@shaw.ca)

JUL 9

**Sacred Sound Inc:** Crystal Singing Bowls: Public information session. Deeply relaxing, restorative and therapeutic. Experience the evocative sound. 7pm, \$10, #1-1718 Marine Dr., West Vancouver. Ph: 604-781-5554 [www.sacredsound.ca](http://www.sacredsound.ca)

JUL 9 & 16

**Touch for Health I: Balance the body,** reduce stress and increase energy. Course held in Langley. Information and sign up, contact Helga, 604-532-1648 or [helgapetersen@shaw.ca](mailto:helgapetersen@shaw.ca)

JUL 10

**Shamanic Drumming & Dreaming Circle:** Saturday, 7pm. Insight and healing from your spirit guardians. Vancouver Multi-Cultural Centre, 1254, W. 7th. By donation. Turtle Island Healing Circles. 604-418-9636. [www.drumcircles.ca](http://www.drumcircles.ca)

JUL 10

**Common Ground Sponsors B.O.T.B. Shakespeare Forum** on Shakespeare and the Abuse of Power. Hosted by SFU's Paul Budra, 7pm, \$5. Under the tents in Vanier Park. 604-739-0559, [www.bardonthebeach.org](http://www.bardonthebeach.org)

JUL 14

**Experience a BodyTalk Session!** \$20 donation. All net proceeds to charity. BodyTalk Vancouver monthly Community Clinic - downtown Vancouver. See ad listing below. Friday, 10am-4pm. By appointment only. 778-389-7909 / [info@bodytalkvancouver.com](mailto:info@bodytalkvancouver.com)

JUL 15-16

**Quantum Healing: Awaken your soul** and enlighten your spirit. A two-day seminar of self-awareness

and energy healing. In Edmonton. 8:30am-5pm.  
[www.Quantum-Healing.name](http://www.Quantum-Healing.name)

JUL 16 & 18

**Chris Chandler comedy & music** Muse and Whirled Retort [www.chrischandler.org](http://www.chrischandler.org) VICTORIA: Sunday July 16, 9 pm, Norway House, 1110 Hillside Ave, 250-413-3213  
July 18, VANCOUVER: Tuesday, 9 pm, The Foundation, 2301 Main St. 604.708.0881

JUL 20, 23 & AUG 29

**Hypnosis - A Career or Selfgrowth?** Free information seminars. Certification course to start in September. Location in West Vancouver. For Information and Pre-registration phone toll free 1-877-244-9101.

JUL 22

**Paint from the soul to expand the heart Workshop:** Create beautiful paintings from your inner vision. No experience necessary. Painting, printing, collage. Supplies provided. Anita Nairne, 604-684-6418, [anitanairne@telus.net](mailto:anitanairne@telus.net)  
[www.anitanairne.com](http://www.anitanairne.com)

JUL 22

**Walkin' Talkin' Urban Ecology** with Suzie Payne. Explore 10 dynamic city blocks, re-imagine liveability in your neighbourhood. 9:30 -1:30pm, 1825 W. 16th, \$20. Info: [suzie\\_payne@hotmail.com](mailto:suzie_payne@hotmail.com) 604-738-0239

JUL 22

**Anxiety? Depression? Bipolar?** FREE Mental Wellness Self-Help Support Group. Information session, 10:30am-12:30pm. Fire Hall Library (W 10th&Granville). Limited Seating. Call 604-630-6865.

JUL 22, 23 & 29

**Mad Tea Party:** July 22 Burrard View Park; July 23 Trout Lake; July 29 Renfrew Park. Noon - 3 pm. Free. Costumes, blankets & snacks welcome. 604 253 6394

JUL 28-AUG 1

**Retreat and Satsang with Neelam:** Intensive Retreat, Centre for Peace, July 28-30. Satsang Aug 1, 1495 W. 8th, 7:30pm, 604-254-9150, [www.neelam.org](http://www.neelam.org)

JULY 29

**Iluminares Lantern Procession** Saturday, 7-11pm, Trout Lake Park, Victoria Drive at 15th Ave. Free (donations welcome),

Information [www.publicdreams.org](http://www.publicdreams.org)

JUL 30

**International Bog Day at Burns Bog:** Free community festival, everyone welcome. Live music, dance, tours, free treats, Kid's Adventure Tent & more. At the Great Pacific Forum Planet Ice in North Delta. [www.burnsbog.org](http://www.burnsbog.org) or 604-572-0373.

AUG 4-6

**Vancouver Prophet's Conference** Just for the Health of It featuring Adam, Bruce Lipton, Judith Orloff, Rupert Sheldrake, David Carson, Rosalyn Bruyere, Nicki Scully and Ken Weintrub. Vancouver Marriott Pinnacle Downtown Hotel. Register by phone at 604-777-5981 or online at [www.greatmystery.org](http://www.greatmystery.org)

AUG 10

**Anoushka Shankar Rise Tour** with 10 virtuoso Eastern & Western musicians, including tabla master Tanmoy Bose with special guest Dharmakasa. Chan Centre for the Performing Arts at UBC, 8pm. Call Ticketmaster, 604-280-3311 or [www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca)

AUG 14-19

**"Living in Delight"** Imagine the gift of a week-long gathering devoted to expanding your unique wisdom and bliss: 12th Annual Women's Crescent Moon Retreat, Cowichan Lake, BC, [www.pwcacamp.org](http://www.pwcacamp.org) 604-433-8817 or 250-386-9530

SEP 5-OCT 31

**Yoga Teacher Certification at Prana Yoga College** - Downtown Vancouver. Unit 1: Sept 5-Oct 2. Unit 2: Oct 4-31. 604-682-2121 or [www.pranayoga.com](http://www.pranayoga.com)

SEP 9-12

**Certification in Energy Medicine! BodyTalk** Training Modules 1 & 2. Four-day foundation courses leading to Certified BodyTalk Practitioner. Payment Plans available. Call 778-389-7909 or [info@bodytalkvancouver.com](mailto:info@bodytalkvancouver.com)

SEP 10

**Angel Readings from Doreen Virtue:** Goddesses & Angels 2006 Tour, Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre, 10am-5pm. Live Angel Readings. Space limited. Register at 800-654-5126 or at [www.angeltherapy.com](http://www.angeltherapy.com)

OCT 27-29

**Electromagnetic Fields workshop:** Identify and solve electromagnetic field problems; bioeffects, symptoms. Certificate. For professionals and laypersons. Outline: [www.essentia.ca](http://www.essentia.ca). (888) 639-7730. Attractive early registration discounts.

SATURDAYS

**Holistic Healing Fair:** Third Saturday of every month. AWAKENING HEART-15177 Russell Ave-White Rock. 10-4pm. Free Admission. 604-535-6603 or [www.emergingpathway.ca](http://www.emergingpathway.ca)

SUNDAYS

**The Centre for Spiritual Living** uniting the world in love. Inspired by the teachings of Deepak Chopra and Louise Hay? You'll love our Sunday services, 11 AM. Children welcome. 1495 W. 8th Ave., Vancouver, 604-321-1225. [www.cslvancouver.com](http://www.cslvancouver.com)

**International Spiritualist Alliance:** #201-317 Columbia Street, New West, 604-521-6336. Sunday services, 11am. Rev. Joyce Tarvin, 604-433-6663. See Resource Directory. [www.isacanada.ca](http://www.isacanada.ca)

TUESDAYS

**Reflexology Student Clinic sessions,** only \$18. Evenings only. By appointment. Pacific Institute of Reflexology. 604-875-8818.

WEDNESDAYS

**Hawaiian Healing Night:** 7 pm. Hawaiian guided meditation, Sharing the Aloha and snacks afterward. Meet like-minded people and share. \$5 donation. At Hale Ola, a place of Healing, 1215 Madison Ave., Burnaby. 604-431-7474, Kaimana and Moanikeala.

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**Children of War fundraiser:** Chai Gallery at East is East hosts a fundraiser for Children of War ([www.thechildrenofwar.org](http://www.thechildrenofwar.org)) local musicians & traditional dancers. Every Wed. eve, 7:30pm-1:30am, 3243 W. Broadway, \$25/door or call 778-837-1862.

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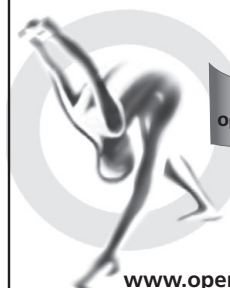
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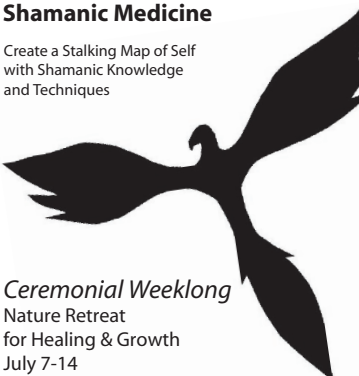
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### **Duncan**

**Tuesday, September 19th, 7:30 PM**  
Quw'utsun' Centre, 200 Cowichan Way  
Info: 1-800-210-0372

### **Victoria**

**Wednesday, September 20, 8:00 PM**  
Cedar Hill Rec Center, 3200 Cedar Hill Rd.  
Info: 1-800-210-0372

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Olson continued from p.17

like Wal-Mart, you can't stop globalization, right? And if we join the US missile defence shield and sign on to Northcom, don't we stand to benefit from shared security? Again, we are being offered the polarities of economic stagnation versus global competitiveness, and civil rights versus police state safety – even though these represent false choices manufactured for us. Once we join Northcom, according to University of Ottawa economics professor Michel Chossudovsky, Canada's "borders will be controlled by US officials and confidential information on Canadians will be shared with Homeland Security." The bi-national arrangements will allow US troops and special forces to enter Canada, he says. "Canadian citizens can be arrested by US officials, acting on behalf of their Canadian counterparts, and vice versa."

In this respect, the difference between the federal Liberals and Conservatives on these matters is one of degree rather than kind, although Chretien's principled stand on Iraq looked better than the knees-to-the-floor submissiveness of our current crop of Quislings. Ottawa's new regime has an enthusiasm for US domestic/foreign policy that is startling in its transparency. Harper has abandoned Kyoto, spoken of Canada's "activist judges," resumed the attack

on gay marriage, barred reporters from photographing caskets returning from Afghanistan, and picked up the habit of ending speeches with a Republican-like "God bless Canada." At this stage in the game, the Tories appear to have little concern about making their intentions plain. Their apparent sense of immunity from the press and the people is in itself alarming.

Michael Chossudovsky asks if annexation of Canada is part of Bush's military agenda. If anything, it is annexation by committee. The absorption of Canada into a North American superstate is happening incrementally, although it has sped up considerably in the past few years. There is no need for Bradley fighting vehicles to roll across the border. With the thorough integration of the Canadian and US economies through NAFTA, and a common military command and control structure, Canadian sovereignty will cease to exist by definition.

Only political players like Fogal and David Orchard are discussing abandoning NAFTA, allowed in the agreement itself by either nation with six month's notice. So why have none of the major parties touched on the issue of deep integration during the election campaign, or afterwards in the House of Commons? Even the NDP has taken a strangely see-no-evil, speak-no-evil stance. The silence not

only highlights the high-level secrecy surrounding deep integration. It also speaks volumes of our traditional political parties and the sorry state of our big media. There is very little debate in print, policy circles and in Parliament over the common security perimeter, or the mooted North American border pass with biometric identifiers. A single economic space, at last freed of all environmental and labour constraints, seems to have all the appearances of a done deal.

Yet the most worrying aspect of the regime change in Canada involves a threat to those much-vaunted "freedoms" that others supposedly hate us for.

In June, Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day revealed that last year law enforcement agencies allowed their "helpers" to commit a broad spectrum of crimes. According to Vancouver Sun reporter Ian Mulgrew, these included "gun offences, passport forgery, counterfeiting, possession of stolen property, and theft over \$5,000." Mulgrew notes that "after 9/11, Canadian law enforcement agencies were given carte blanche to break the law if necessary... as it stands now, police, park wardens, fisheries officers, custom officials, jail guards and their agents are immune from prosecution for virtually anything short of obstructing justice, non-consensual sex or violence." And abuses of power aren't likely to

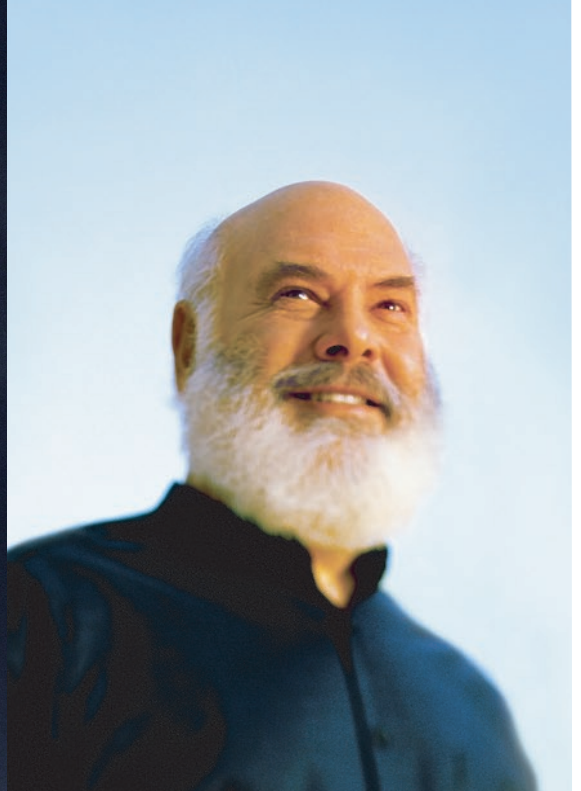
go reported, due to the all-purpose rationale of "security." Incredibly, the February 2002 immunity law is still on the books. With the recent arrests of alleged terrorists in Toronto, there will undoubtedly be greater enthusiasm to enlarge police powers at the municipal and provincial levels.

If you still doubt the depth of Canada's transformation, consider how quickly our role in Afghanistan went from "peacekeeping" to an open-ended, indefinite war in Central Asia against the "destable murderers and scumbags" described by General Rick Hillier. The General told *The Globe and Mail* "this is a 10 year mission – minimum." Yet one ever asked the electorate if the expansion of our military role overseas was desirable or even sensible. In the House of Commons, MPs were allowed only one "note-taking" debate on the matter, with no opportunity to vote. This is not the behaviour of representative democracy, but rather of a totalitarian-lite proxy state.

Manipulating people by fear and uncertainty is a time-tested way to get democratic citizens to deconstruct their own civil institutions, and quietly assume the roles of prisoners and prison guards. Is it time to start using the "f" word for both Canada and the US? As we look into the political abyss, are we seeing the darkening signs off fascism?

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# Leg Circulation Formula

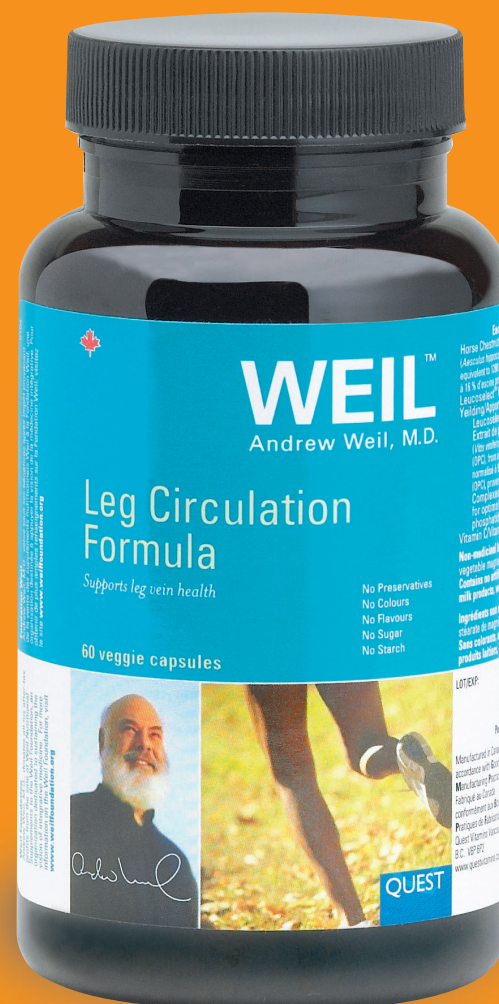
*"Grape seed extract is commonly prescribed in France for varicose veins and other vascular problems. However, the natural product I generally recommend for varicose veins is horse-chestnut seed extract (HCSE), a remedy popular in Germany that is believed to work similarly to grape seed extract (to reduce pain and swelling in the legs) but has been more extensively studied."*

  
Andrew Weil, M.D.

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